THE FINDING OF THE BOOK
: AND OTHER POEMS :

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
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THE FINDING OF THE BOOK
AND OTHER POEMS

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BY

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PREFACE

AFTER the lapse of many years, a new edition of my poems has been fairly called for. The present issue, however, is scarcely so much another edition as another book. Half the volume consists of poems not to be found in its predecessor. Those which remain have been much altered, and of the longer pieces only episodes have been selected.

WILLIAM ARMAGH.

March 1900.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

I VERY well know that he who would write anything in verse likely to live must surrender himself to verse passionately and almost undividedly, for poetry is as exacting as she is beautiful. And indeed there was for myself a time, very long ago, when I was near believing that I had a call to consecrate myself to the sacred muse; that I might possibly become one of the brethren who prophesy with harps, and are instructed in the songs of the Lord. But a summons which I could not resist made me, to my surprise, a governor of the sanctuary and of the house of God. Yet even now, late in my troubled day, I look back to my former purpose. And here I gather together fragments mostly which

(with three or four exceptions) I have had no sufficient time either to conceive deeply or to finish even after the measure of my own poor powers. Some, I already know, care for the things such as they are, and think them not altogether worthy of death. Perhaps God may enable me to say in the sweeter dialect dear to me long ago some things which I have failed to say in prose. If so, I shall thank Him from my heart. If not, the Church and the world will suffer no great wrong from me; and, for myself, I do not much fear a whiff of sarcasm and the painless punishment of oblivion.

WILLIAM DERRY AND RAPHOE.

1886.

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Poems Imaginative and Reflective

I never yet heard music, howe'er sweet,
Never saw flower or light, ocean or hill,
But a quick thrill of something finer still
Touch'd me with sadness. Never did I meet
Any completeness but was incomplete;
Never found shapes half fair enough to fill
The royal galleries of my boundless will;
Never wrote I one line that I could greet
A twelvemonth after with a brow of fire.
Thus then I walk my way and find no rest—
Only the beauty unattain'd, the cry
After the inexpressible unexpressed,
The unsatiated insatiable desire
Which at once mocks and makes all poesy.

THE FINDING OF THE BOOK

[SUGGESTED BY READING BACON'S 'NEW ATLANTIS']

THE enchanted island rose before me, drawn
  More beautiful than words of mine may reach;
It lay magnificent in a magic dawn,
  And full of boscage to the foam-fringed beach.

How well the city of the sons of knowledge
  Stood, giving pleasant prospect to the sea!
The fabulous and fancied island college
  Unfabled and unfancied grew for me.

In secret conclave of a sea so vast—
  Earth's widest wilderness of waves ring'd round—
No mariner ever caught from any mast
  A glimpse or inkling of that happy ground.

Yet now (such fair adventure did I win!)
That I could see and hear whate'er of state
Or thought, or work or worship, was within
That Muse-discovered island Fortunate!

I saw the House of Solomon strongly stand,
No fane so noble springs from any sod;
The oracle and lanthorn of the land,
Where Nature is the interpreter of God.

The College of the Six Days' Work well called,
Whence traders issue—not for gain or might,
For gold or silk, for spice or emerald—
Only for God's first creature, which is light.

I saw the masters of the speech and pen,
Those cunning in the secret cause of things;
Whose aspect was as if they pitied men—
A temperate race, a commonwealth of kings.

And, reverencing self, each soul was great,
And, reverencing God, to each was brought
With long calm striving strength inviolate,
With virgin purity victorious thought.

Being such they scorn the mob's vain fierce
desires
Whereof coherent reading may not be,
Like the wild message interrupted wires
Send in magnetic storms below the sea.

Yet deem'd I 'Something wants where all is fair,'
I sigh'd, 'Man doth not live alone by bread'—
'What of the higher life, whose breath is prayer?
What of the touch of sacraments?' I said.

Behold! a chime of bells rang toward the east,
To a cathedral moved a white-robed host,
And of the wisest each man was a priest,
And broadest brows were those that brighten'd
most.

Within, i' the midst, was a scroll clasp'd with
gold,
And one stood forth of look more sweet than
strong,
And (for the day was festival) he told
'The Finding of the Book' in measured song.

'One eve like this, a thousand years ago,
Our merchantmen of light were weary grown;
Wise men are strong, but for the strong 'tis woe
To know the holiest of truth unknown.

'And then through all the cloister'd aisles of beech,
The fluted stems from whence the builder learns,
There passed a softer breath than any speech—
A dying light stream'd inward on the ferns.

'Those trees stand waiting through the silent years,
Expecting some one who doth never come;
So sternly happy over human tears,
To human words so eloquently dumb.

'They wait some song that winters never sing,
Some summer blue that eye hath never seen,
The far-off footfall of some spellbound spring,
That lingers unimaginably green.

'But through them passed that eve a mystic
breath,
A hint from God to all their leaves was given,
Some inarticulate news of life and death,
The anticipation of some gift from Heaven.

'And when the sun had sunk, and the night was
Cloudy and calm, some mile into the sea
Upon our eastern coast it came to pass
A light unspeakable hover'd far a-lee.

'There sail'd a pillar from some shore unknown,
Pillar with cross atop, and both of light;
And all the ocean hush'd its stormy tone,
And awe was on the azure infinite.

'The throng upon the strand made not a stir,
But boats put forth to see the lights divine,
And the crews stood as in a theatre,
Beholding this, as if a heavenly sign.

'And after prayer, the wisest of our wise
Toward the pillar rowed with muffled oar,
Half fear'd that at one sound beneath the skies
The delicate dream might fade for evermore.

'When, as the boat drew near, its crew much awed,
The moon being partly hid by pearly bars,
Pillar and cross did cast themselves abroad
Into a firmament of many stars.

'What ark was that? How chanced it on the tide?
No gallant ship upon the ocean rode,
No lights were lit the mariners to guide,
On pencill'd spars no sail was moon-besnow'd.

'Sole there remained that tiny cedar ark,
Wherefrom there grew one small green branch of palm,
Which open'd, nothing but the Book they mark,
Wherein is written every holy Psalm;

'And all the histories of the Hebrew years,
And all the treasury of soul-complaints,
And all the dim magnificence of seers,
And all the sighs and silences of saints,

'And all the visions by the Patmian shore,
Cycle in cycle orbing manifold,
And all the hopes that make the sweet heav'n more
Than a mere mist of amethyst and gold.

'And chief enshrined above earth's waves of strife,
The unfathomable words that Jesus saith—
And all the loveliness of one white Life,
And all the pathos of one perfect Death.'

What high fulfilment hath thy vision found?
What fair adventure hath thy fancy brought?
With what rich wreaths is thy Utopia crown'd?
And what success hath fallen to thy thought?

The thinkers and the workers walk apart
Upon the banks of Isis and of Cam.
The worker from the thing miscall'd his heart
Casts forth like ice his morsell'd epigram.

The thinker owns of mere subjective worth
His thought, and piles his doubts like flakes
of snow,
And o'er a darken'd universe drivels forth
His feeble and immeasurable 'No.'

And that sweet story! Ah! the Book enfolden
Unstain'd and glorious by the branch of palm,
O'er it the shaft of light and cross more golden,
Round it the sea's illimitable calm;

Came it so gently within cedar barr'd,
And floated it on waves so grandly lit,
And kept the angels such a watch and ward,
And arch'd such tender azure over it,

That the white page should be so darkly blotted
By the high treason of the sceptic's ink,
And the one story of a life unspotted
Fall into four as certain critics think?

That the sweet breath of miracle should die,
Like the brief odour of the cedarn ark,
On earth's one truest page be branded—Lie!
On its one chronicle of sunlight—Dark?

And He whom we adore with bended head,
What tints are these the mockers intermix?
The riddle of the years is poorly read,
A contradiction loads the crucifix.

They call Him King. They mourn o'er His eclipse,
And fill a cup of half-contemptuous wine,
Foam the froth'd rhetoric for the death-white lips,
And ring the changes on the word 'divine.'

Divinely gentle—yet a sombre giant;
Divinely perfect—yet imperfect man;
Divinely calm—yet recklessly defiant;
Divinely true—yet half a charlatan.

They torture all the record of the Life,
Give—what from France and Germany they get,
To Calvary carry a dissecting-knife,
Parisian patchouli to Olivet.

They talk of critical battle-flags unfurl'd,
Of the wing'd sweep of science high and grand—
And sometimes publish to a yawning world
A book of patchwork learning second-hand.

Wing'd, did they say? but different wings uplift
The little living ecstasy sunward borne,
And the brown-feather'd thief, with one poor gift,
To stoop and twitter as it steals the corn.

Patience! God's House of Light shall yet be built,
In years unthought of, to some unknown song,
And from the fanes of Science shall her guilt
Pass like a cloud. How long, O Lord, how long?—

When Faith shall grow a man, and Thought a child,
And that in us which thinks with that which feels
Shall everlastingly be reconciled,
And that which questioneth with that which kneels.

And that true Book—the lovely dream is o'er
Which saw it shelter'd well beneath the palm,
Sent by a saint from some mysterious shore,
Its tiny frigate floating o'er a calm.

No vessel bore it to a sacred isle,
No magic kept it from the salt sea-spray,
It had no perfect charm of Grecian style,
No shaft of glory heralded its way.

Yet, peradventure, shall diviner seem
The chronicle of a severer truth,
Than all the fabulous colouring of the dream
That tinted it so richly in our youth.

And yet, for all the puzzle of the lines,
All the discordant copies stain'd with age,
A more miraculous lore it intertwines,
A grander Christ looks radiant from its page.

For all the stammering of those simple men,
A fourfold unity of truth they reach:
Drops as of light fall from their trembling pen,
And Christ speaks through them with a tenderer speech.

And through all time our fathers' faith shall speed,
And the old utterance be still found right,
And eastward chanted rise the changeless creed—
O very God from God, O Light from Light!

And from the human thought that freshly springs
From hearts that ever to the high heaven look,
From the brave student's fearless questionings,
Shall come a fairer 'Finding of the Book.'

FAITH'S RESURGENCE [1]

I

In the Indian dawn
Many a long, voluminous fold,
Vicious blue and viscous gold,
Twenty living feet of hell,
Glides a snake into the grass
From an old tree in the dell.
Hush! and if thou wilt behold
Vibrant tongue and fang of fire
Through the woodland and the lawn,
Loathlier than by poet drawn,
Yet possessing the strange spell
That doth fascinate too well,

[1] This poem was written shortly after the appearance of M. Renan's *Vie de Jésus*, and attempts to convey the author's first impression of that extraordinary performance. The incident of the youth and the snake was read in a volume of travels, but he has not preserved his reference.

To yon forest, higher, higher,
Let the anaconda pass.
Front not thou that fell small eye,
Lest thou die.

II

In the season's fulness
Out a certain volume came—
Flash and fineness, serpents' flame,
Tints that glitter and enthrall,
Lit it with the rich surprise
Of the art rhetorical.
Fire it had and epigram,
Many a plausible 'perhaps';
Finite scales for infinite maps;
Perfect hatred's perfect coolness;
Poetry sometimes, never dulness;
Pictured words which coloured lies
Cast, fantastic fallacies.
Through those painted panes, the eyes;
That one sinless and august
Figure of the Perfect Just,
Crown'd in half-admiring scorn
With a fresh acanthus-thorn,

Patronised with knowing nods
Of a connoisseur of gods;
Doubts well scatter'd if a known
And real God hath any throne;
Lofty words for low surmises,
Mean in beautiful disguises.
Faith! that fatal book pass by,
Lest thou die.

III

In the Indian morn
Out a gallant boy there went,
Archer of the orient.
Young, at the young day he laughed—
Blue heaven smiled on his intent.
Shafts his quiver did contain,
And a death in every shaft;
In his hand his bow was bent,
The long worm rais'd long back, lit head.
Soon his mother came forlorn;
Dead with small stab, as of thorn,
Saw her boy by the serpent, dead,
With an arrow of his craft,
With a sharp and wingèd shaft,
Fastened in its evil brain.

What cared she?—Our darlings slain
Live not with our life again.
What cared she?—Her hunter lay
Dead that day.

IV

In his gentle wrath
One of Christ's young soldiers took
All the peril of that book;
Feared not for the fulgent skin,
Slew the serpent of its thought,
Triumph, as it seemed, did win—
Pen and page of poison! Look,
Strange and terrible surprise!
Something has pierced in of death,
Some fang stricken life's first faith.
All the childlike has passed out
With the small black stab of doubt.
Films are o'er the dewy eyes,
Life's first sweet credulities
Faded under summer skies.
Mother weeps for graces dead,
And will not be comforted.
By the book it overthrew
Faith died too.

V

Make not mourning longer—
Resurrection follows death.
A regenerated Faith
Like the first, but fairer much,
Like the first, but grander, stronger,
Rises where the first fell down—
Proof against the poison'd touch,
Proof against the serpent's tooth.
Broader brow the Risen hath,
Vaster amplitudes of truth ;
Understands the peril wholly,
Faces foes more fully seen,
Wider, wiser, more serene,
With a hopeful melancholy.
Mourn not, therefore, overmuch,
Though the child-faith's death be such—
Stronger faith wins starrier crown.
Gone the boy's free thoughtless laughter,
Man's grave smile shall come thereafter,
As he walks contented out
From the shadow of his doubt,
Frosty sunshine round about.

Faith hath her own tonic light—
Faith in Pity infinite
For the infinite pathos found
In our human life all round,
By the God who at its centre
That most sorrowful life did enter,
From it gently feeling thence
Round the vast circumference—
For the first faith, fair and bold,
But by knowledge uncontrolled,
Be consoled.

THE FOYLE GRAVEL-BOAT [1]

I stood upon yon Bridge, 'neath which
The murmuring Foyle so nobly flows.
The winter made the sunset rich
With brass that in the sunset glows,
With vast and visionary rose,

Born sudden, tremulously dead,
Fading in blue and golden grain—
And westward far one's eye was led
Where the great river's wrinkled lane
Of glory dusk'd and shone again.

On the right bank the frosty mist
Wrapt street and church,—but up far higher
What sacred pointing finger is 't?
The cross on the cathedral spire,
White under a wild stretch of fire,

[1] Suggested to the writer upon Derry Bridge in January 1888.

As if to teach that everywhere
O'er task of toil and field of fate,
Whatever be the sky or air,
Are signs that tell our low estate
Of gentleness that makes us great.

Then I looked next with lifted heart—
Lo! a barge on the far-lit line.
Galley or argosy thou art
For all that night-dark sail of thine,
Part of some dim old song divine.

Down-stream thou droppest with no stir,—
On such as thee in golden days
Some credulous old chronicler,
His finger on his lips, did gaze
Childlike in credulous amaze;

Waited to carry home with him
Some story it was well to ponder,
Looking, while heaven grew half dim,
Now musing and now smiling, under
A sky whose light was one of wonder.

A traveller told him on the quay,
And swore that he on board had shipp'd—
Who could doubt one with beard so gray?
So from the chronicler it slipp'd
Richly into his manuscript.

O traveller! whose golden hap
Found wild seas foaming far from us
Ungirt by the insult of a map.
(His ample stories broadened thus
Mandeville or Herodotus.)

Ship!—he averr'd that thou didst pass
With gum wept from Arabian trees
To burn at Christmas midnight mass
—And some suspicion faint of these
Sweet cargoes stole out on the seas;

As when the first Epiphany sent
Those kings (than whom were wiser none)
Westward to find the Orient,
Star-led all day to make the one
Star-lit discovery of the Sun;

Or else thou borest over-sea
The rare stone that enricheth so
Gem-gravel of Taprobane,
That hath the blood-drop's delicate glow
On the white pigeon's wing of snow.

Or, an it liketh you, a tale
Of a young king in battle slain—
His queen bid hoist such night-black sail—
Upon the deck is a red stain,
And on his white cheek is a rain.

O'er his closed lids a gold veil rare,
And a voice on the river cries—
The pale gold is a woman's hair,
The rain falls from a woman's eyes
Under the January skies.

Or else, O ship! 'twas told that thou
Some holy missioner had on board—
God's love lay gently on his brow—
Who came to tell some heathen horde
Of the Incarnation of the Lord.

Pointing so gently to the rood
That irresistible sweetness lay
Upon it—and the men of blood
Asked for the holy font that day
To wash the stains of sin away.

Silence!—yon barge is but a boat
Where poor men carry day by day
—Not gems and gums from isles remote,
Not kings from battles far away,
But gravel to the city-quay.

Yet those we see not looking on,
Better than poesy in their glance,
Ere further homeward they are gone,
May deem that bearing loads perchance
Is earth's poor nearest to romance.

PICTURA POESIS

GENOA, 1872

Two sunny winter days I sped along
The Riviera's winding mountain way;
Scarcely I caught the blue sea's faint far song,
By terraced hill and olive-shaded bay.

Far off the Alpine snow's eternal line
Stretch'd over hills with wondrous curves cut well,
Against the iridescent dome divine,
The cupola of light ineffable.

They say thought loses 'neath the Italian heaven
The mortal languor of its modern scorn;
That England's passionless pilgrims may be given
An ampler soul beneath an ampler morn.

Would it were thus! In sooth it may be so,
Yet well I ween, my littleness I bore
In sight of the imperishable snow,
In presence of the glory of that shore,—

Selfish before that purity without end,
Faith's eye ungifted with a sight more keen,
What time the outward eye had fullest kenn'd
Those long deep distances of lustrous sheen.

False where our God so many a secret writes
In lovely syllables for souls elect,
Here, where the very winter half his nights
In gardens sleeps of roses not undeck'd.

If he have wrinkles, they are greenly hid;
If murmurings, they are tuned to silver seas;
And any dimness from his brow is chid
By the gold lamps of all the orange-trees.

And so we came to that world-famous sweep
Where, on her amphitheatre of hill,
Old Genoa looks superbly on the deep,
As if she held her own Columbus still;

As if toward Africa, at close of day,
Her galleys headed under press of sail,
And brave old Admiral Doria, grim and gray,
Watch'd from the terraces their golden trail,

And to the gentle girl who paced beside
Told tales of sinking ships and war-clouds dun,
Until he heard again the hurrying tide
And the long growling of the battle-gun.

Yet still, through all the witchery of the clime,
My heart felt burden'd with its former pain;
I asked for something beyond reach of time
To make me for a little young again.

Nor ask'd in vain,—for wandering here and there
To see the pictures with an idle heart,
Above the red Palazzo's marble stair
I own'd the magic of old Vandyck's art.

Be still, and let me gaze—a noble child
Upon the Master's canvas here I see:
Surely two hundred summer suns have smiled
Italian light, young Brignola, on thee.

The light that makes such violets divine,
And hangs such roses on the haunted soil,
And spheres such flashes in the flask of wine,
And fills the olive with such golden oil.

The light, too, that makes hearts with living chords
Too fine for happiness—that never fails
To ripen lives too richly—whence the words
Of all those strange pathetic passion tales.

But thou, immortal child! with those dark eyes,
And that proud brow—I will not call it white,—
A something rather like the snow that lies
Between dark clouds and the unclouded light.

I know not, will not ask what was thy fate—
Whether thou laughedst in this very spot,
Then wentest forth in beauty with thy mate,
A fair adventure and a gentle lot.

Whether with intermingling gleam and gloom
Thy shadows and thy sunshine did rain down,
Like that sweet lady in the other room,
Thy sister with the gold on her green gown.

Whether thou livedst till the winter came,
And the calm with it that life's spring denies,
Retaining only of thy present frame
The unextinguish'd light of those full eyes.

Whether thou lovedst, and the winds of heaven
Blew favourably,—and, thy moon-touch'd sail
Glimm'ring into the dark, to thee was given
The voyage of a little fairy tale.

Whether thou lovedst—after that forlorn
Tasting the bitter out of human sweet,
Thy forehead pierced with some acanthus-thorn,
The cruel thistles stabbing all thy feet,

Till, as befalls in this strange land of thine,
Where prayer and passion, earth and heav'n
so mix,
A mournful thing thou fledd'st to love divine,
And found'st a bridegroom in the crucifix.

But as it is, thou standest here for aye,
Type of the gracious childhood of the South,
Thy dark hair never fleck'd with threads of gray,
No channell'd lines under thy perfect mouth.

Thou hast no grief, no selfishness at all.
Possessing all of beauty but its scorn,
Thou floatest smilingly outside the Fall,
Unsuffering, unsinning, unforlorn.

I cannot question thee,—if thou couldst speak,
Thy soft Italian would but touch mine ears
As if a sweet wind beat upon my cheek
Through the dim light a rain of flowers and tears.

Enough that, wrought by Vandyck's master hand,
I see thy beauty by an inward sight,
And in a better language understand
Thy childhood's inextinguishable light.

PICTURA MATHESIS

Follow the pictured forms that Vandyck drew,
One life-wide lesson thou mayst learn ;
Each happy gift, each perfect work and true,
Thou to thyself mayst turn.
Lo ! here the fulness of his Flemish style,
Here the patrician of the opulent seas,
His golden Genoese,—
The noblest work comes last, the sorrow or the smile.

Early he strove to paint as Rubens did,
And then his charmèd soul he sets
Under a spell that doth the first outbid—
Titian's or Tintoret's.
Last he supremely paints, superbly drawn,
Kings that are kings, and forms that float in fold
Of olive-green and gold,
The immortal satin dress with ribbons red as dawn.

Nor only robe of state and courtly pride—
To Genius prophecy is lent—
Upon its wondrous work shadows abide
Of fine presentiment.
Rise above amber sleeve or lovely lace,
Turn thee to Charles, and question breathing low
Why thou art haunted so
By the pathetic king with long, proud, tragic face.

We too begin by being what we are taught,
And work in the traditional gyves,
Pierce not at first to our predestined thought
Nor lead our real lives.
Rise up, my soul! above the narrow shelf
Where thou wert pinion'd by thy former schools;
Wisely forget their rules,
And far more nobly taught, more nobly be thyself.

PICTURA ZETESIS

'A WINTER GALE IN THE CHANNEL'

(*Painted by Henry Moore*)

I

I LOVE this ocean picture's pale reserve :
No tints unnatural of purpling grain,
Azure, or opal, mar the rough grey main,
The sweep, the swing, the long froth-churning curve,
The shoreward working and confusèd swerve
Of yellowing water—white blooms wear such stain
All dashed and muddied with the April rain.
No poor ambition did the painter nerve !
Well that no laboured ship or sun-burst broke
The strong monotony of that sky and surge.
Leave, only leave, the line of stormy smoke,
The sea-birds dashed upon the nearer verge,—

Brave in its truth this ocean piece shall be
The type for us of Homer's harvestless sea.

II

Nor only this—lesson of more than art!
  Who dares, strong in simplicity, despise
  The evanescent beauties that arise
Before his gaze, and, in true thought apart,
Look on straight forward to life's very heart:
  Who dares, by gift supernal rendered wise,
  Deem truth more beautiful for all true eyes
Than garish things made merely for the mart;
Whether he paint or write or live his thought,
  To that which he produces shall be lent
  An immortality of ravishment:
One day it shall be own'd divinely wrought;
  And all the sternness of its strength shall be
  Like the grave beauty of this pictured sea.

BEAUTY OF WORSHIP

GROWTH AND OVERGROWTH

I. GROWTH

Oft have I mused what use the ancients made
Of solemn service and of stately form,
On what fair frame of visible things they stayed;
What music fell in tears or rose in storm,
What soft imaginative rites they had,
With what investiture their faith they clad.

Not then the church rose visibly encrowned;
No mighty minster towered majestic yet;
No organ gave its plenitude of sound;
And on the Alpine pinnacle was set
No carven King, whose crown is of the thorn,
No Calvary crimson in the southern morn.

No miracle of beauty and of woe
Look'd from the wall, or for the rood was hewn;
No colour'd light fell on the floor below.
Under the silver of the Italian moon,
No visible throng of angels made their home
On the white wonder of the Gothic dome.

Yet, fed with inward beauty through the years,
Much did the Church's mind anticipate
Of more majestic fanes, more tuneful tears,
Simplicity more touching, nobler state.
—So the pale bud, where quietly it grows,
Dreams itself on unseen to be a rose.

Questions by meditative wisdom ask'd
Must wait for answer till the hour beseems;
Souls were as yet unborn severely task'd
To give interpretation to such dreams;
Shapes by the master-hands as yet unfreed
Slept in the massive marble of the Creed.

The picture slept within the Gospel story;
The music slept on psalms as on a sea;
In a dim dawn before its dawn of glory
The poem slept, a thought that was to be.
The schoolmen's syllogisms, a countless train,
Were folded in some strong and subtle brain.

Christ said, 'I need them.' Out the colour sprang,
The music wailed and triumph'd down the aisles,
With voices like the forest's poets sang,
Invisible thoughts grew visible in smiles—
In smiles, and tears, and songs, and the exact
Majestic speech by centuries compact.

II. OVERGROWTH

'Nay, over-gaudy grown with time that grows,
Religion robes herself in rainbow dyes.
Ah, sighs and tears! the sighs she doth enclose
In bubbles, and the tears she petrifies;
And pomp enwrappeth in a golden pall
The rich rigidity of ritual.

'First, let the soul be beautiful within;
Then the soul's beauty duly shall create
Form, colour, harmony, to awe and win—
Outward from inward as inseparate
As music from the river when it flows,
Shadow from light, or fragrance from the rose.

'My portion be the austere and lowly fane,
The quiet heart that praises ere it sings,
The genuine tears that fall like timely rain,
The happy liberty from outward things,
The wing that winnoweth the ample air,
The heaven's gate touch'd by the soft hand of prayer.'

DEATH OF MATTHEW ARNOLD

Weep, if ye have the power to weep,
All flowers of musical and odorous names
That haunt the woodland or the wave of Thames;
Weep, if ye have the power to weep,
Let sweet mists your quaint eyelids steep,
Fling incense from your many-colour'd flames.

Mourn, if ye have the power to mourn,
Glaciers and Alpine firs—ye too, sea-isles!
Divided now by a blue waste of miles,
In some far summer unforlorn,
Ere each was from the other torn,
Seen by your poet in primæval smiles.

Spirits, if joy perforce must dwell
With you where Arnold's grace upon you breaks,
Goethe and all his golden-thoughted Greeks,—

If ye must hail such stranger well,
At least amidst your asphodel
Let roll in silver up your mystic creeks

Some rippled tidings of our woe,
Who miss the noble voice that sweetly sings,
The central rest through all disquietings,
The far-off light that crowneth so
The line of the eternal snow,
The beauty hidden in the heart of things.

And we in these cold April bowers,
Since Laleham's sod enwrapp'd his hands and feet,
Are poorer by a stately presence sweet,
And miss through all spring's wealth of flowers
Phrases that made them doubly ours,
Poet of meadows, stars, and Marguerite!

Poet in our imperfect time
Of high completeness and of lucid ease—
Calm master touching song's superbest keys,
Magician of the subtler chime
That needs not fatal sweet of rhyme,
Having true Sophocléan cadences.

Death of Matthew Arnold

Poet of exquisite regret,
Of thoughts that aye upon Time's duller height
Out of the storm shall stand in stars of white,
Of perfect lines most purely set,
Each centred in an epithet
Touched with a pencil-tip of fadeless light.

Surely to thee a lot doth fall,
With light and sweetness richly circled round;
Spinosa's rigid lines of wire unwound
No longer hold thee in their thrall—
Thou hast won liberty, and all
'Sweet reasonableness' in the Word hast found.

Though we miss sore one Name divine,
Which wanting, so much else beside is miss'd,
No purer air our human brows e'er kissed
Than breathes out from each ice-pure line
In all those starlit songs of thine.
All virgin pages somewhere whisper—'Christ!'

FONS JUVENTUTIS

No time shall want its verse superbly wrought,
For aye sweet Poesy renews her youth,
Hangs songs like hawthorn from the sharpest thought,
And daisies o'er the ploughshare track of Truth.

And aye let Science disenchant at will,
And set her features free from passion's trace,
A new enchantment waits upon her still,
New lights of passion fall upon her face.

And aye as Poesy is said to die,
Her resurrection comes. She doth create
New heaven, new earth, an ampler sea and sky,
A fairer Nature, and a nobler fate;

For stealth of Science, poverty of Fact,
  Indemnifies herself in gold of song,
And claims her heritage in that blue tract
  Of land which lies beyond the reach of wrong.

And being divine, believeth the Divine,
  And being beautiful, creates the fair,
And always sees a further mountain line,
  And stands delighted on a starrier stair.

THE SONNET, THE LADY, AND THE PRINCE

A VIGNETTE AND MORAL

A ROYAL barge once brush'd the meadows
Nigh tall trees by yon river's tide.
Bathed in its leafy lights and shadows
Head-down a linnet dropp'd quick-eyed
In leaves, gold-dipp'd on his green side.

The linnet heard a lady's foot
Who met a princely lover there.
On the deck standing flush'd and mute,
She might have half his gems to wear
For rent of one red rose a year.

Linnet! thou sangest last note of thine
One blue day centuries ago.
The woodlands' various green divine
Hath died, and different branches grow
Over a different river-flow.

The linnet pipes its latest note;
The tree it sang from leafs no more.
There 's no plank left of that fair boat,
The river 's nearer to the shore—
The king is dead, his line is o'er.

The bird's shy restless heart is still,
The light green wings are woodland clay;
The king's bones moulder at Moville
By that faint-glimmering far-away
Sweep of immeasurable gray.

Wrapt by wild hills both sleep. The cross
Above their graves is lichen'd red,—
The very rain upon the moss
Seems to say more than all they said,
The very shadows there are dead.

THE DISTANT SAIL

One touch there is of magic white,
  Surpassing southern mountain's snow,
That to far sails the dying light
  Lends, where the dark ships onward go
Upon the tremulous stretch of miles
That leads to the enchanted isles.

O ship! O sail! far must ye be
  Ere gleams like that upon you light.
O'er golden spaces of the sea,
  From mysteries of the lucent night,
Such touch comes never to the boat
Wherein across the waves we float.

O gleams which seem to us divine,
  Life's whitest sail ye still refuse,
And flying on before us shine
  Upon some distant bark ye choose.
This only of them can we say,
Such sails are ever far away.

THE OLD MAN AND THE SHIP

AN ARMENIAN LEGEND

'Tis sunset, and the wind is blowing fair;
Her anchor soon the good ship will be weighing,
Toward the cross above the harbour stair
The mariners are praying.

The sky was flaming westward, and the flood
Was flashing all afire by bay and cape,
Till their dazed eyes upon the awful rood
Could scarce discern the shape

That all day long they saw from off the ship—
The imaged Man of Sorrows on the Tree,
With blood-drop on the brow, and thin white lip
Above the pitiless sea.

Now they averr'd that some resplendence came
And on the carven hair and face did smite,
Till in a furnace as of silver flame
The whole was lost in light.

And in the glory as it disappear'd
Suddenly hung an agèd Pilgrim there;
White as the snow was his majestic beard,
White as the snow his hair.

No thorny crown was on his ample brow,
No blood-drops issuing from wounded palm,
Divinely was the bitter passion now
Changed into passionless calm.

The fierce light faded then above, below,
And on the deck the sailors were aware
Of an old man, with beard as white as snow.
Sweet was his pleading prayer:

'The land I seek is very far away—
Long have I tarried on this shore remote—
My brothers, ye are bound for it to-day,
Oh, take me in your boat!

'So shall I sooner see its mountain line,
Its immemorial forests' purple dome,
And hear the musical murmurings divine
Of rivers round my home.

'Those rivers run in crystal ever clearer,
Sweetly baptising bluer violets,
And those eternal mountain-tops are nearer
Some sun that never sets.

'Silver and gold for guerdon have I none,
But prayers, deep prayers, I offer for my freight,
Such as Heaven's gentle heart have often won,
When man hath said "Too late!"'

The mariners replied: 'Our ship is large
And words are light, and merchants must be paid;
A ship like this, with all her heavy charge,
Is not for prayers,' they said.

Then stepp'd the old man down upon the sand,
Wind-sifted, sparkling as the mountain sleet,
And scoop'd it with his thin and feeble hand,
And flung it at his feet.

And down it fell in spangles on the shore,
A marvellous dust of silver and of gold,
Nor ceased until the mariners twice o'er
The greybeard's freight had told.

Blind souls of men refusing their true bliss,
God's highest offers, and yet sweetly still
He bribes them by these lower gifts of His,
Against their own proud will!

So to the bark once more the pilgrim pass'd.
Out sail'd the gallant vessel homeward bound,
But evermore in silence by the mast
The pilgrim might be found.

While the ship raced upon an even keel
And floated buoyant as an ocean bird,
Upon the deck, or up beside the wheel,
No voice of his was heard.

Only sweet virtues grew beneath his eye—
Both Charity and Hope, which are Heaven's sole
Prime roses, and Humility, the shy
Meek violet of the soul.

Only at vesper-tide, from time to time,
Invisible angels, from the starlit stair,
Touch'd all their spirits to a more sublime
And an intenser prayer.

Only by night, what time they cross'd the pale
Moonlight into the darkness, high and higher
Each topmast seem'd a cross, and its white sail
Was snow'd with sacred fire.

At last a storm rush'd down upon the flood,
And the tyrannic winds sang loud and strong;
The pilot cried, 'Beneath this dreadful scud
No vessel can live long.'

Soon rose surmise who might the pilgrim be,
His passage-money how he came to win:
'God's wrath,' they thought, 'is working in the sea
Because of this man's sin.'

Whereat the old man rose, and, 'Through the storm
Give me your ship,' he said, and straight did take
Mysterious likeness to the wondrous Form
On Galilee's wild lake.

'Sleep sweetly while the ocean works and stirs,
Sleep sweetly till we cross the seething bar,
Sleep on, and take your rest, O mariners,
For mine own crew ye are.'

So look'd He upward with His calm bright eye,
So made the holy sign with His right hand,
His left upon the helm—immediately
The ship was at the land.

But as the ship with all sail set was steer'd
Bravely into the port around the cape,
No more might ye have seen a silver beard,
No more an old man's shape.

But calm He stood, as when He wears His crown
Upon the Calvary on some southern peak,
Or where above the altar He looks down,
With blood-drops on His cheek.

And those who knew the Cross so far away,
Toward which they pray'd above the harbour stair,
Said that its perfected reflection lay
Upon the Pilgrim there.

So the shore redden'd with the holy dawn,
And the bells chimed from all the churches round,
And the long surf's fall on the beach was drawn
Into one psalm-like sound.

And, 'Rise from your sweet sleep,' the hymn outrang,
'From your sad dream, or from your slumber sweet;
Here is our Lord, and here our ship,' they sang,
'Oh, fall at Jesus' feet!'

VENICE, 1872.

[This legend is given in a small collection which I read in the Armenian Convent on the Liddo.]

VOYAGE TO BABYLON

A FRAGMENT

Behold! on an Assyrian quay
Fast by the town of Nineveh,
At moon of night, methought I stood
Where Tigris went with glimmering flood;
And walls were there all storied round
With old grim kings, enthroned, encrown'd,
Strange-visaged chief, and wingèd bull,
Pine-cone, and lotus wonderful.
Embark'd, I floated fast and far,
  For I was bound to Babylon.
  I saw the great blue lake of Wan,
And that green island Ahktamar.
  I saw above the burning flat
  The lone and snow-capp'd Ararat.

But ever spellbound on I pass,
  Sometimes hearing my shallop creep,
  With its cool rustle, through the deep
Mesopotamian meadow-grass.
And now (as when by moons of old,
Grandly with wrinkling silver roll'd,
It glimmer'd on through grove and lea,
  For the starry eyes of Raphael
Journeying to Ecbatane)
The ancient Tigris floweth free,
  Through orange-grove, and date-tree dell,
  To pearl and rainbow-colour'd shell,
And coral of the Indian sea.
Take down the sail, and strike the mast,
Here is Euphrates old, at last.
Begirt with many a belt of palm,
Round fragrant garden-beds of balm,
(In one whereof old Chelcias' daughter
Went to walk down beside the water,
The lily both in heart and name,
Whose white leaf hath no blot of shame)
Grandly the king of rivers greets
His Sheshach's hundred-gated streets.
  Through the great town the river rolls.

. . . . .

Who are these sitting by the billows,
With their harps hung upon the willows?
What time on Judah's hills they trod,
  Science of song to them was given,
The harpers on the harps of God,
  The poets of the King of Heaven.
Mournful their strains, but through them still
The hope of their return is seen,
Like a sun-silver'd sail between
  Dark sea and darkly purple hill.
Strange race! that reads for ever scrolls
  With future glories pictured bright,
  As sunset's golden pencils write
  Those slanting sentences of light,
When tree-tops dusk, on dark green boles.
By the broad pulses of this river,
Keeping one even time for ever,
  Since Amraphel was King of Shinar,
They long for Jordan's spray and shout,
And linkèd music long drawn out,
  Passioning with song diviner,
  From waterfall to waterfall.
O for the line of long green meadows,
Waters whose gleams are silver shadows,
Whose glooms, where wood-hung hills arise,

Are darkness dash'd with silver fire,
And glens through which those waters come
With many a crashing downward call,
With sweeping sound of battle pomp,
With blaring of the battle trump
And double of the battle drum.

. . . . .

DEATH OF SAMUEL WILBERFORCE, BISHOP OF WINCHESTER

How thin the veil between our eyes
  And angel wings in motion!
How narrow the long ledge that lies
  'Twixt us and death's dim ocean!

They rode by sunlit copse and glen,
  And 'neath the woodland's shadow
They spurn'd, with hoofs that rang again,
  The cruel sloping meadow.

A plunge—a fall—and lo! the rock,
  The veil was rent asunder.
How swift the change, how sharp the shock,
  How bright the waking yonder!

Old England heard it with a start;
She mourns with voice uplifted:
Mother of many a noble heart,
But ah! what son so gifted?

From his own Oxford's storied hall,
Her stream by light oars ruffled,
To where, beside the plane-trees tall,
His Winton's bells are muffled,

The whole land has an air of grief
For that great wealth departed—
Her peerless prelate, statesman, chief,
Large-soul'd and gentle-hearted;

The man so eloquent of word,
Who sway'd all spirits near him,
Who did but touch the silver chord,
And men perforce must hear him;

Who won rude natures at his will,
And charm'd them with the glamour
Of his sweet tongue, and kept them still
Forgetful of their clamour;

Who from no task for Christ soe'er,
  True soldier, sought indulgence,—
To him it wore so grand an air,
  Was lit with such effulgence;

Who sweetly smiled, and deftly plann'd,
  And his true work to fashion,
Like hammers in a skilful hand,
  Took every party's passion;

Whom men call'd subtle overmuch
  Because all threads of beauty
He interwork'd with magic touch
  Into the web of Duty,

And from their hundred varying dyes
  Wove well a wondrous colour,
That might have pleased malignant eyes
  More, if it had been duller;

He for whom many hearts are sore,
  Lost to so many places—
The great cathedral's crowded floor
  A hush of upturn'd faces,—

The village church, where children knelt
Beneath his hands o'ershading,
And rugged men sweet comfort felt
Or tender true upbraiding,—

The Senate, barren evermore
Of the rich voice that stirr'd it,—
The platform, where the charm is o'er
That spellbound all who heard it.

How many a noble deed he plann'd!
How many a soul he guided,
With sympathy of heart and hand,
And feelings many-sided!

And when the social lists were lit,
And worthy foemen tilted,
How flash'd the poignard of his wit,
Keen-bladed, diamond-hilted.

Sleep calm in earth, a Bishop robed,
Waiting God's golden morrow.
O memory, leave the wound unprobed,
Nor bring too sharp a sorrow!

Let love draw near, and hope and faith,
Where the good saint lies sleeping;
His white face beautiful in death,
His soul in Christ's own keeping.

WILLIAM DERRY.
C. F. ALEXANDER.

EPITAPH ON AGNES JONES

BURIED IN FAHAN CHURCHYARD

ALONE with Christ in this sequester'd place
Thy sweet soul learn'd its quietude of grace;
On sufferers waiting in this vale of ours,
Thy gifted touch was train'd to higher powers.
Therefore when death, O Agnes! came to thee—
Not on the cool breath of our lakelike sea,
But in the workhouse hospital's hot ward,
A gentle helper with the gentle Lord,—
Proudly as men heroic ashes claim,
We ask'd to have thy fever-stricken frame,
And lay it in our grass beside our foam,
Till Christ the Healer call His healers home.

EPITAPH

ON REV. ROBERT HIGINBOTHAM

IN DERRY CATHEDRAL

Down through our crowded lanes, and closer air,
O friend, how beautiful thy footsteps were;
When through the fever's waves of fire they trod,
A form was with thee like the Son of God.
'Twas but one step for those victorious feet,
From their day's walk unto the golden street;
And they who watch'd that walk, so bright and brief,
Have mark'd this marble with their hope and grief.

INSCRIPTION

ON THE STATUE ERECTED TO CAPTAIN BOYD IN ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL, DUBLIN

O IN the quiet haven, safe for aye,
If lost to us in port one stormy day,
Borne with a public pomp by just decree,
Heroic sailor! from that fatal sea,
A city vows this marble unto thee.
And here, in this calm place, where never din
Of earth's great waterfloods shall enter in,
Where to our human hearts two thoughts are given—
One Christ's self-sacrifice, the other Heaven,—
Here is it meet for grief and love to grave
The Christ-taught bravery that died to save,
The life not lost, but found beneath the wave.

EPITAPH
ON SINCLAIR MULHOLLAND

FOR A WARD OF A HOSPITAL

THY body rests beneath the Italian sod,
Thy soul's inheritance is the light of God;
Yet here our hopes and memories of thee
Who sleepest well beside the far blue sea
We twine, all fair and sunny as they are,
With other sights and scenes that differ far,—
With sickness, mortal agony, and tears;
Yet not reproach from thee affection fears.
In anguish comforted and want sufficed
Thy spirit joy'd on earth, as now with Christ.

THE HIMALAYAN DAWN

AN OLD MAN'S OPTIMISM [1]

I

'Tis dark around on either hand—
Old I am, marching in a mountain land.
Will the dawn never be unroll'd?
Mercy of heaven! but it is cold.
Hush! in some tongue I understand
A song is sung, a tale is told,
Telling of things that are both new and old.
Voice of the mountains grave and grand,
It tells how earth shall yet be rosed
With sweeter dawn than ever yet reposed
On it, when I was there to see.
When shall this be?
Not yet, not yet.
When, oh when?

1 This poem was suggested by a description which was given to the author by a traveller of the beautiful phenomenon of the dawn before the dawn in the highest region of the Himalayas.

II

When o'er my grave the grass shall still be wet
With dews of morn I cannot know,
The day of God shall dawn on earth below
With splendid glimmer far above the dark.—
What song was that from some dim distant
glen?
Hark! hark!

III

Thou, whose soul with darkness aches,
Among these Himalayan brakes
Higher, look higher! some glory wakes,
Some glory that is grandly lent
For morning's fine presentiment;
Sure there are watchers for whose sakes,
Divinely on the mountain lawn
The long succession of the peaks
Is lit with fires.
From sacred snows superbly drawn
Touch'd with the dawn before the dawn,
The morn that cometh ere the morn,
The day's faint fancy of the day unborn—

A light is on yon far-up spires
Long ere it lies upon the lakes,
Striking the rhododendrons red
That circle round the rocks so far away,
Whilst the heav'ns' vault is still so gray
Starry, and thou in shadow art,
As yet a prophecy in part
Dark based, peak touch'd with fulgency divine,
The Himalaya of the heart
Begins to show the immeasurable line.

IV

Pilgrim, pass on!—in lands beneath the hill
It shall be day when thou art gone,
For other eyes to see, not thine.
Thus man's long hope our God shall yet fulfil,
When we are still.

ROBERT BURNS

All Scottish legends did his fancy fashion,
All airs that richly flow,
Laughing with frolic, tremulous with passion,
Broken with love-lorn woe;

Ballads whose beauties years have long been stealing
And left few links of gold,
Under his quaint and subtle touch of healing
Grew fairer, not less old.

Grey Cluden, and the vestal's choral cadence,
His spell awoke therewith;
Till boatmen hung their oars to hear the maidens
Upon the banks of Nith.

His, too, the strains of battle nobly coming
From Bruce, or Wallace wight,
Such as the Highlander shall oft be humming
Before some famous fight.

Nor only these—for him the hawthorn hoary
Was with new wreaths enwrought,
The 'crimson-tippèd daisy' wore fresh glory,
Born of poetic thought.

From the 'wee cow'ring beastie' he could borrow
A moral strain sublime,
A noble tenderness of human sorrow,
In wondrous wealth of rhyme.

Oh, but the mountain breeze must have been pleasant
Upon the sunburnt brow
Of that poetic and triumphant peasant
Driving his laurell'd plough!

A FINE DAY ON LOUGH SWILLY

Soft slept the beautiful autumn
  In the heart, on the face of the Lough—
  Its heart, whose pulses were hush'd,
Till you knew the life of the tide
But by a wash on the shore.
A whisper like whispering leaves
  In green abysses of forest—
  Its face, whose violet melted,
    Melted in roseate gold—
  Roses and violets dying
  Into a tender mystery
    Of soft impalpable haze.

Calm lay the woodlands of Fahan:
The summer was gone, yet it lay
On the gently yellowing leaves
  Like a beautiful poem, whose tones
  Are mute, whose words are forgot,

But its music sleepeth for ever
Within the music of thought.
The robin sang from the ash,
The sunset's pencils of gold
No longer wrote their great lines
On the boles of the odorous limes,
Or bathed the tree-tops in glory,
But a soft strange radiance there hung
In splinters of tenderest light.
And those who look'd from Glengollen
Saw the purple wall of the Scalp,
As if through an old church window
Stain'd with a marvellous blue.

From the snow-white shell strand of Inch
You could not behold the white horses
Lifting their glittering backs,
Tossing their manes on Dunree,
And the battle boom of Macammish
Was lull'd in the delicate air.
As in old pictures the smoke
Goes up from Abraham's pyre,
So the smoke went up from Rathmullen;
And beyond the trail of the smoke
Was a great deep fiery abyss
Of molten gold in the sky,

And it set a far track up the waters
Ablaze with gold like its own.
Over the fire of the sea,
Over the chasm in the sky,
My spirit as by a bridge
Of wonder went wandering on,
And lost its way in the heaven.

The ship is out on the lake,
The fisherman stands on the deck.
Rosy and violet sea;
Delicate haze in the distance;
Woodlands softer than summers;
Great golden eye of intense,
Concentrated, marvellous light;
Mysterious suggestions of thought;
Beautiful yearnings of fancy;
Wonderful imaginations;
Throbs of the being immortal
Who, prison'd deep in the heart,
Looks through the bars of the flesh:—
What recketh he of them all?
So to the reasonless eye
The Master's picture is only
A heap of colouring flat,
A strange confusion of strokes,

And thought, and study, and books,
And fine traditions of taste,
Are the glasses through which we survey
The beauty of natural things,
Till stars come splendidly out
That our eyes would have never beheld;
And cultured association
Hangeth to things that we see,
Hints and prophetical types,
Shadows grand and immortal,
Sacraments dim and delightful,
Of the things that the eye hath not seen.

O this ship and ocean of life!—
I, like the fisherman's boy,
On this awful beautiful sea
Gaze on a glory for ever
That I love not, nor know as I ought—
Sail on a beautiful deep,
Hear the soft washing of waves
That set to the shore of our God—
Look on purpureal hills,
Look on exquisite woods,
Soft, and most solemn and stately—
Sail toward the gate of Heaven,
Yet know it not, nor consider!

Hues more radiant by far
Than the Autumn ever could give
Move round my wondrous existence,
The daily deep of my life;
Prospects of things that shall be
In the country over the waves—
Memories, sorrows, and thoughts—
Noble and beautiful words,
Deeds that darkly reveal
The transparent measureless depth
Of the soul of our nature's Redeemer.
O for the day that shall teach me
To know their meaning at last,
Beyond the lake of this life,
Beyond the gate of the sunset
Upon the hyaline sea!

YESTERDAY

NEVER was yet to-day whose incompleteness
  Lack'd not a somewhat of the bliss it brought,
Till it inherited the dim faint sweetness,
  The mystic distance of the sky of thought,
Till we baptized the dead hours now away
By the ethereal name of yesterday.

THE BIRTHDAY CROWN

If aught of simple song have power to touch
Your silent being, O ye country flowers,
Twisted by tender hands
Into a royal brede,

O hawthorn, tear thou not the soft white brow
Of the small queen upon her rustic throne,
But breathe thy finest scent
Of almond round about.

And thou, laburnum, and what other hue
Tinct deeper gives variety of gold,
Inwoven lily, and vetch
Bedropp'd with summer's blood,

I charge you wither not this long June day!
Oh, wither not until the sunset come,
Until the sunset's shaft
Slope through the chestnut-tree;

Until she sit, high-gloried round about
With the great light above her mimic court—
Her threads of sunny hair
Girt sunnily by you.

What other crown that queen may wear one day,
What drops may touch her forehead not of balm,
What thorns, what cruel thorns,
I will not guess to-day.

Only, before she is discrowned of you,
Ye dying flowers, and thou, O dying light,
My prayer shall rise—'O Christ!
Give her the unfading crown.

'The crown of blossoms worn by happy bride,
The thorny crown o'er pale and dying lips,
I dare not choose for her—
Give her the unfading crown!'

AMONG THE SANDHILLS

From the ocean half a rood
To the sandhills long and low
Ever and anon I go;
Hide from me the gleaming flood,
Only listen to its flow.

To those billowy curls of sand
Little of delight is lent—
As it were a yellow tent,
Here and there by some wild hand
Pitch'd, and overgrown with bent.

Some few buds like golden beads
Cut in stars on leaves that shine
Greenly, and a fragrance fine
Of the ocean's delicate weeds,
Of his fresh and foamy wine.

But the place is music-haunted.
  Let there blow what wind soever ;—
  Now as by a stately river,
A monotonous requiem 's chanted ;
  Now you hear great pine-woods shiver.

Frequent when the tides are low
  Creep for hours sweet sleepy hums.
  But when in the spring tide comes,
Then the silver trumpets blow
  And the waters beat like drums.

And the Atlantic's roll full often,
  Muffled by the sandhills round,
  Seems a mighty city's sound,
Which the night-wind serves to soften
  By the waker's pillow drown'd :

Seems a salvo—state or battle's—
  Through the purple mountain gaps
  Heard by peasants ; or perhaps
Seems a wheel that rolls or rattles ;
  Seems an eagle's wing that flaps ;

Seems a peal of thunder, caught
  By the mountain pines and tuned
  To a marvellous gentle sound;
Wailings where despair is not,—
  Hearts self-hushing some heart wound.

Still what winds there blow soever,
  Wet or shine, by sun or star,
  When white horses plunge afar,
When the palsied froth-lines shiver,
  When the waters quiet are;

On the sandhills where waves boom
  Or with ripples scarce at all
  Tumble not so much as crawl,
Ever do we know of whom
  Cometh up the rise and fall.

Need is none to see the ships,
  None to mark the mid-sea jet
  Softening into violet,
While those old pre-Adamite lips
  To those boundary heaps are set.

Ah! I see not the great foam
That beyond me strangely rolls,
Whose white-wingèd ships are souls
Sailing from the port called Home,
When the signal bell, Death, tolls.

And I catch not the broad shimmer,
Catch not yet the hue divine
Of the purpling hyaline;
Of the heaving and the glimmer
Just hid from these eyes of mine.

But by wondrous sounds not shut
By the sandhills, I may be
Sure that a diviner sea
Than earth's keels have ever cut
Rolls towards eternity.

Historical

A MINOR LATIN POET IMPROVING VIRGIL

I

Lo! trembling all his transitory passion,
The poet of a lay
Crowds in a feeble and fantastic fashion,
And triumphs for a day;

II

Whenas superb with a divine repression
Upward the epics reach,
And all the ages make their wise confession—
'This is man's noblest speech.'

III

The tale that leads us o'er the loftiest ranges,
In splendour or in tears,
That none can make more perfect when he changes,
Stands steadfast through the years.

A MINOR LATIN POET IMPROVING VIRGIL[1]

Here speaks the laureate of a little throng,
The young Licentius whose deft art confers
Some grace upon the later Latin song—
Waxwork, not marble, in hexameters,
Drawing in colours, soft but soon to cease,
A pastel, not a proud old masterpiece.

End of their idlesse to the friends drew near,
It chanced the afternoon was mild and fine.
The Master cried, 'What ho! the sky is clear.
Come, poet, read the verse thou call'st divine.
Nay, and I will not blame thee overmuch
If thou mix with it thine own gentle touch.

[1] During the retreat of St. Augustine and his party at Cassiciacum before his baptism, Licentius frequently read Virgil or his own poems to his companions.

'Thy Virgil bring. With him thou shalt bring
flowers,
Odours emparadised in fadeless phrase.
Thou shalt set bees a-humming in the bowers,
And make us weep for old immortal days;
And, pagan though he be, yet shall we bless
God's gift in him of exquisite tenderness.

'Fling, then, o'er us the great magician's spell,
Read with meet cadence while the eve is
clear,
Tell o'er again what our hearts know so well.
The moonlit sea shall quiver as we hear—
In one six-beated line a tale be stored,
A garden gathered in one perfect word.'

To whom Licentius.—'Lately I was thinking
Of the delicious love-tale Virgil wrought—
Out of his cup my spirit had been drinking;
Rather, I sank into his ocean thought.
And with the tide I swam that summer sea,
And all its waves grew buoyant under me.

'There was a murmur in my ears and heart,
Whereof the larger music came from him;
But of mine own there was a little part,
Little indeed to his, and harsh and dim.

Of Homer's mighty song and high intent,
Sonorous echo, theft magnificent

'He made; but ah! I marred whate'er I
stole—
He the rich-fruited scion, the stem I
Of the poor pomegranate, lending to the
whole
Only the red tint of my poverty—
He like the bird's white wing above the river,
I the white shadow that can reach it never.

'Listen! I breathed our soft Numidian air;
I saw Elissa to the hunting go;
The golden-netted sunshine of her hair
Flickered in sunshine as it fell below.
The golden baldrick flung she round her breast,
The golden fibula clasped her purple vest.

'With yellow jasper-stone his sword-hilt
starred,
He how majestic, like a prince indeed,
How stately she, how regal of regard!
A huntress on her white Massylian steed.
And, though the jocund morning waxes late,
Herself impatient makes her lover wait,—

'Who looks like Phœbus, when he Cynthus
treads,
After the Lycian snows and streams ice-
mute,
Walking with murmurous rush of river-beds;
While heaven is silver, and far underfoot
Anemones spring, and daffodils are born
For golden tassels to his bugle-horn.

'Ah me! how beautiful to her he seem'd,
To whom such fascination there was given.
The mountain-tops whereon his boyhood
dream'd
Had forests haunted by the hosts of
Heaven.
Out of the sunset sky ablaze with flame,
Out of the far-off silences he came;

'Came with the music of the Idalian pines
Round him, with whispered message from
the star,
His mother's herald o'er the mountain lines,
Until dawn steeps her pure pale primrose
bar
In rosiest-coloured radiance ever born
Out of the ivory palaces of morn;—

'Came with such touch of moonlight on his sail,
From such resplendent distances of foam,
With all the loveliness of such a tale,
The spell of such a visionary home;
And finely floated round that princely form
A mystery of the battle and the storm.

'Full soon she sobs, "Stay if my prayer avails;
Train me to bear the last long parting thus;
Stay till our Afric wild-flow'rs fill the dales,
Till yon waves look less strange and dangerous,
Till I shall discipline this poor heart so
That with the swallows I may let thee go.

'"Ah! an thou fleest, then my wraith be found
Where'er thy fateful footsteps yet shall stand—
My very shadow shall be gold-encrowned,
My very shadow shall be sad and grand;
My shadow haunt thee on each sea and lawn,
Mute in the moonlight, dying in the dawn.

'Perchance he would have stayed, but not
in vain
The calling to our purpose on us lies.
Our lives are links in a remorseless chain.
Of what avail to her that his heart sighs
"Elissa, and a Carthaginian home,"
When Heaven and all its influence will have
Rome?

'Soon this hath passed. The parting all is
o'er,
And all her passionate reproach of him,
And all the watching from the salt seashore
Of the sail fading o'er the ocean rim—
Of the sail fading on the cruel sea,
On the false wave not half so false as he.

'Night, gentle night, rushed from the Afric
sky.
Head under wing the birds of wave and air
Slept, hushing all their sweet small poesy.
If we have our forgetfulness of care,
So have those little hearts in bower and brake,
And the still dreamland of the starlit lake.

'But she her fiery bed premeditates,
And "Let him see the smoke, a far-off breath,"
She wails; "a blur on Summer's lustrous gates,
And bear with him the omen of my death—
Ah no! my poor heart be, till it wax dim,
A taper on a shrine, and burn for him.

'"And if so be that Herè in her ruth
Send Iris with the hopes and hues of heav'n
To hang above my death, I pray in sooth
That half the sweetness may to him be given,
And half my rainbow melt away in rose
And violet on the ocean where he goes."

'This passed away—and then meseemed to tread
The underworld in visionary sleep.
Æneas-like I visited the dead.
Behold! a spirit passed, who seemed to weep
Not hopelessly. "Young Poet!" did he say,
"Men called me Maro while I saw the day.

'"Each of us poets hath his proper gift;
Not all the gift to use the gift aright.
Red cups of battle or of wine they lift
Wildly, and stain what should be lily-white.
Each bloom has thus its cankerworm within,
Each splendid line is thus a splendid sin.

'"And others sang high strains with mean intent
Or for the tyrant of their little time,
Or gave to hatred what for love was meant;
Less than immortal made immortal rhyme,
So that the satire with the years has grown
A fossil scorpion with a sting of stone.

'"The Latin tongue was lent me at my will.
Lo! the flowers fade upon the summer leas,
The storm of battle passes, and is still;
But sorrow is a deeper thing than these—
Sorrow for human things lasts through the years,
I was the first that chose the gift of tears.

'"I used it as an instrument to express
Beyond all battle camps, and courts of kings,
The majesty of human tenderness,
Sweet ruth for the vicissitudes of things—
The subtle pathos, the magnetic touch,
The broken voice that tells the heart so much.

'"Once the dim prophecies floating round the earth
I gathered—thornless roses, stormless seas,
Meadows in blossom for a better birth,
Mother and child, *nova progenies*—
All this I twined for all the race of man
In higher strains than aught Sicilian.

'"And is it nothing that I taught all this,
That through the world's confusion sweetly smiled
Before me the conception of our bliss,
The happiest Mother, the divinest Child,
That scarcely once or twice did touch impure
Fall on my virginal emportraiture?"

'Then with low voice he asked, "And is there hope?
Or must I wander always—lost, lost, lost?"
Out like a rose the dawn began to ope,
This side and that the clouds were crimson crossed,
And manifold voices round us seemed to say,
"Yea, there is hope, but it is far away."

'Ah! not so far—for low and winning sweet,
"*Venite, invenietis*," some one said;
Like breath of balm upon the heart it beat.
Light ran along the region of the dead.
The echoes multiplied from east to west,
"*Venite ad me omnes—suave est.*"'

Licentius ceased. To Elissa's tale at even
A hundred times within the twenty years
Augustine's tender heart had duly given
The tributary offering of his tears.
Yet,—while the boy's big drops of ruth he chid,
The salt dew trembled on the Master's lid.

And Monica thought how first she read the tale
In her Numidian home at eventide,
Thought of Æneas with each sunlit sail,
Thought of Elissa with each wave that died.
The saint perhaps condemned it, but alas!
The woman sighed, and said how sweet it was.

As to the boy's deep ruth and tender prayer
For Virgil, be there silence grave and wise.
The mother of the Master was aware
How the first woodland walk through which we rise
To the precipitous mountain-peak of truth
Is love—the sunlit heresy of youth.

ST. AUGUSTINE BY THE ITALIAN LAKES

SOMETIMES at morning, or at eventide,
Augustine look'd upon the lake and sky—
Not there the glory of light for which he sigh'd
In all the autumn heaven of Italy.
'Poor shadows are ye—yea, but dimly bright
To me remembering my Afric light.

'Ah, light! with its attendants all day long,
Soothing and charming with a magic touch.
It passes not like every measured song,
Its vast and variegated train is such,
Its omnipresent tide of silver flow,
The queen of all the colours of the bow.

'O light! which Isaac and which Jacob saw
Falling upon the dim prophetic scroll,
When with closed eyes they taught the holiest law,
The light that radiates from the luminous soul—
True light thou art of an unsetting sun,
And all who see thee and who love are one.

'And they who turn away and this disdain
Dwell in the flesh as in a shady place;
And yet of this whatever doth remain,
Whate'er half-glooming glimmer touch their face,—
Yea, all that charms—is overflow divine,
And circumfulgence of that light of Thine.

'Yet even here, upon this lawn of rest,
I miss the splendour of my own far ocean,
The various robes which wondrously invest
The evanescent moods of his emotion—
Green of a hundred shades and the fine fall
Of azure tint and pomp purpureal.

'Fair are these waters as these hills are fair,
A fit enfolding for a rustic home;
But who their narrow beauty may compare
With that majestic amplitude of foam?
These azure reaches where the reeds scarce shake
The long calm silver of the Lombard lake,

'They cannot thunder with a voice like his,
They cannot show the immeasurable line,
They have no smoke of white foam o'er the abyss,
No distances that infinitely shine,
No beat of a great heart, no pendulous swing,
No angry flap as of an eagle's wing.

'He has the magic swell, the tinkling fall,
In drowsy days of truce, when skies are pure,
Monotonous, incessant, musical;
And when his trumpets sound for war, the obscure
Æonian eloquence, the vast replies
Voluminous, the interminable sighs.

'The fierceness of him no man shall refrain—
See him with all his water-floods astir,
Like a great king, nigh dispossess'd of his reign,
Staggering with fated hosts, a traveller
Against the wind upon his shoreward track,
His torn white hair tormentedly blown back.

'They have but one sweet look and steadfast tone:
Save when the tempest's battle may be set,
The war of their white passion passes soon;
His the great epic, theirs the canzonet,
And the brief storm-bursts like an angry ode,
And the floods flashing like an episode.'

A NAMELESS PENITENT

With her a boy of fifteen summers came.
Into the presence of the lad did pass
An influence from a climate as of flame;
And in those lustrous eyes of his there was
A hint of flowers and oceans far away
Amid the woods and waves of Africa.

Him evermore a shadow overhung,
Not of the great Numidian forests born—
The prophecy of genius that dies young,
The far cloud-film of a too radiant morn.
Ah! they who early pass through one dark gate
Have looks like thine, thou young Adeodate!

Thou art of those who breathe with a strange smile
The delicate words that only genius saith ;
Guests whom God spares us but a little while,
For they are wanted in the land of death,
And leave but tracks of light that was not seen,
Hints of a golden land that might have been.

Hast thou no mother with a name to note?
It is not written in the tenderest scroll
That love and recollection ever wrote,
The perfected confession of a soul.[1]
Into the dark she glides, a silent shame,
And a veil'd memory without a name.

And the world knoweth not what words she pray'd,
With what long wail before the altar wept,
What tale she told, what penitence she made,
What measure by her beating heart was kept,
Nor in what vale or mountain the earth lies
Upon the passionate Carthaginian's eyes.

[1] *St. Augustine's Confessions.*

Well that one penitent hath found such grace
As to be silent in the silent years,
That no light hand hath lifted from her face
The silver veil enwoven of her tears.
Well that to one book and one sod 'tis given
To keep one tender secret half with Heaven.

Well that the virgin saints of her may cry,
'Our sister comes, mute after many tears—
Some anguish rounded by a victory
Is hers, some calm after a storm of years.
O noble pity, that consoles her quite!
O large forgiveness, touching all to white!'

ST. AUGUSTINE'S RECOLLECTION OF CASSICIACUM

'My one holiday,' oft the old man cried,
'When shall a holiday be mine again?'
When the fierce Huns are on the mountain-side,
When he lies sick to death in August—when
The cactus-flowers of Hippo 'neath the blue
Are steep'd with crimson blood-drops through and through;

When through the date-groves in the scarce-lit dales
Over the Seybous and his dreaming calms,
The importunate sweetness of the nightingales
Disturbs the old man's memory of his psalms,
And a thin thread of scarlet morning breaks
Silently on the Atlantéan peaks.

DEATH OF ARCHBISHOP MALACHY[1]

Late, late, in the October afternoon,
The monks sat listening spellbound in the choir;
The voice went ringing on, a lovely tune,
A touch of pathos, or a shaft of fire.
The sunset flared blood-red, the wild marsh-hen
Shriek'd through the long reed lances of the fen.

Within was spring. Voice to low breezes set
Through the greenwood, over the mountain's brink—
Voice of Christ's dove, His undefilèd—yet,
Not so much sweet itself of song, I think,
As the soft sign whereby we understand
That all things sweet are gathering in the land.

'O that some saint might come to us, and teach
From his rich certainty our poor *perhaps*!

[1] At Clairvaux on his way back from Rome to Armagh.

Yea, by his death preach what I cannot preach—
How earth's hopes scare at last, as when there taps
Some broken branch of bloom through storm and rain,
Like death's white finger on the window-pane.'

Scarce was the sermon done, the blessing o'er,
A train of horsemen halted at the gate.
'My Lord the Abbot,' said the janitor,
'One like an angel comes to us full late,
Primate of a green island o'er the sea;
His name, too, is an angel's—Malachy.'

Four or five days flow'd on in fair discourse;
Gracious his speech and stately his regard.
Oft would he warn them with prophetic force
That he was come to them to meet the Lord.
He rode to Clairvaux in October mist,
The Feast-day of St. Luke the Evangelist.

Something of fever flush'd his pallid cheek;
To Bernard mournfully a little while
Out of his spirit's trouble did he speak
Of certain tribesmen in his restless isle.[1]
'Patience,' he cried, 'that tree of hidden root,
And bitter rind, that hath so sweet a fruit,

'Be the good guerdon of the bishop's heart,
The turbulent sheep who shepherds in that land.
Full often must he bear, with breaking heart,
The long ingratitude, the plot well plann'd,
The deep suspicion hid with laughing eye,
The poison'd dagger sheath'd with flattery.

'They do possess such imitative grace,
Such exquisite sympathy when needed most,
Such fine emotion feign'd with mobile face,
Such passionate speech—withal the enormous boast,
The shallowness of hearts that seem so deep,
The candid lie that makes you laugh and weep.

[1] The unpleasing character here given is very much softened from the original. Writing from several years of personal knowledge, I can say with entire truth that the people of every element in Armagh—Celts, English, or Scots—are distinguished by mutual kindliness and social as well as personal virtue.

'O grand traditions, forged me any morn,
Ethereal sentiment for solid gold,
Vows soon unvow'd, oaths laughingly forsworn,
Facts no historian happens to have told,
Fair, faint, false legends of a golden spring,
A past that never was a present thing.

'The thrush sings sweetest with his speckled breast
Against the hawthorn jags, their poets say;
His loveliest notes are agony exprest,
So that the little pain seems rapture: they,
So sharp, so soft, so pitiless, so forlorn,
Sing like the thrush, and stab you like the thorn.

'God's pardon rest on them. All that is o'er,
The time of my departure is at hand,
And here my rest shall be for evermore,
Far from Armagh and from that fatal land.'
So he; yet still his frame was full of grace,
And death seem'd distant from that comely face.

Yet on All Saints, 'Behold,' the leeches said,
'Before to-morrow must the Archbishop die';
Her loftiest rite the monastery made,
And sang her music of festivity.
Thankless the task, inopportune the art,
To sing sweet songs to sorrow's heavy heart.

And sorrow was in that Cistercian home—
Sorrow untuned the chant of choir and priest.
One only tasted of Christ's honeycomb,
One only knew the fulness of the feast.
All Saints to Malachy was but the small
Dim vesper of his glorious festival.

'Lover and friend are darkness—light within.
Love is eternal; and I love my Lord,
And love you all; haply my love may win
Somewhat from Thee, O Christ! whom I regard
Humanly pitying, for man's heart is Thine;
Divinely helping, being Thyself divine.

'Let me not fall into the bitter pain
Of death eterne for any pains of death.
Let Christ's omnipotence manifested reign,
Making omnipotent one who languisheth,
Whose thought and will and memory growing dim,
A trinity of misery, call to Him.'

So, near the twilight was the veil withdrawn.
Into a morn-red sea did his sail sweep—
A sea not dim with twilight, flushed with dawn.
If grey mists melt, if God's belovèd sleep,
Why search the sea-mists when he sails no more?
Why weep for him whose weeping all is o'er?

Then, though all look'd to see the fair soul sail
Into the mystery o'er life's furthest line,
The moment that it cross'd might none prevail
To note for a memorial, or divine
The very moment on God's clock to tell
When all was over, and when all was well.

Only the Abbot softly said—'Behold,
Life is a sea, whose waters ever swing;
A wood, whose leaves like bells are ever toll'd.
A tranquil God makes tranquil everything.
Here is no trembling leaf, no wrinkling wave,
But such serenity as sleepers have.

'Sleep, brother, sleep, until the golden year;
Until thou sing, "Let us arise and see
If the vine flourish—whether the grapes appear,
If all the red buds gem the Passion tree?
Till on our hearts shall breathe a better day,
And chase the clouds of human things away.'

Ah! never sorrow comes that comes alone.
Deep calleth unto deep, and wave to wave;
Saint calleth unto saint, and ere hath grown
Grass on one sod, there is another grave.
The angels of one deathbed come again—
White clouds returning after God's own rain.

SIR TESCELIN'S REMONSTRANCE[1]

I WOULD much rather rest with my rough race
Close to the altar in the church I built;
I would the villagers should see my face
And Aleth's marble under a canopy gilt,
Whispering—'*This was a joyous knight and just,*
They say he is a thousand years in dust.

'*A thousand years he wears his shirt of mail,*
And his good hound is couchant at his feet;
If that tough cheek of his be deathly pale,
'Tis but the stone that makes such paleness meet,

[1] The father of St. Bernard. The Saint prayed, 'I would be saved, O Lord, but not alone.' He pleaded that the whole family should be given to him and drawn into his Cistercian house—six brothers, a sister, his mother, Lady Aleth, and his father. All came to him, his father last. No doubt the free spirit of the Burgundian noble revolted against the monastic life, and after the lapse of so many years one can still pity the old man.

And in his calm eye, come what tide soe'er,
Is sure regard of everlasting prayer.

'Yet is it certain what monks say—that souls
Are lost in circles of light as in a flood,
That the saints worship day and night in stoles,
Posed without end in marble attitude,
Or like the angels on a vestment shown
Stitched in a sapphire prayer before the throne?

'All the night long Sir Tescelin looks to the east,
And the sweet lady by him never stirs.
But when the thin moon wanes down to her least,
And dawn plays faint about his marble spurs,
Doth he not sometimes seem to waken? Hist!
Doth the white falcon flutter on his fist?

'All the night long he prays, I have no doubt,
When o'er the October moon the big clouds whirl,
And ever and anon she cometh out
With fleece of rainbow and of mother-o'-pearl—

Her flying touch some minutes' space being still
White on the broken waters by the mill.

'But is not yon stiff hound about to yawn?
The lady to hear mass as is her wont?
Are not the rustics going to the lawn
To see the gallants gathering for the hunt?'
Ah! this is idle talk, for well know I
Such things are not in that eternity.

But what and if my appointed time draws near,
And I and all I have is doomed to death;
And what and if for all that I hold dear,
The grace of the fashion of it vanisheth;
And if this poor old heart at last must go
Like a tree broken by its weight of snow—

May I not die upon my Aleth's bed,
With shadows of the long familiar trees
Making their chequer-work upon my head,
Amid the humming of my yellow bees,
Where to the sun my peacocks spread their stains
Upon my castle terrace of Fontaines?

YOUTH RENEWED

YES; with heavy dashing
  Of a shower just shed
On the gloomy beech-tree,
  Wet were leaves o'erhead.
Wet were all the roses
  On the garden wire,
Wet were all the cornfield's
  Flakes of yellow fire.

By the gloomy beech-tree,
  By the rose o'er-blowing,
Looking on the cornfields
  Whence the gold was going,
Walked I sadly thinking,
  'I am no more young,'
When among the dripping
  Leaves a wild bird sung.

Ah! I thought, it chanted
Some immortal strain
Of a silver sunshine
Coming after rain;
Of a richer flushing
On a finer rose;
Of a tint more golden
Than the autumn knows.

Yes; with sorrow wetted
In life's autumn day,
Is the cheek full often
When the hair grows gray:
All the leaves and blossoms
Drip with rain of tears,
And the sheaves lie sodden
On the field of years.

Then a sweet bird singeth
Of a joy that lies
In the grief that 's truer
Happiness in disguise;
Sings of youth more lasting,
Sunlight more divine—
Gentle bird, sweet Spirit,
What a song is thine!

Forty seems as old age
In youth's happy light.
Fifty counts as nonage
When the head is white.
Fifty, sixty, seventy—
Old age cometh never,
If the Life gives the life
Which is for ever and ever.

THE ROSE OF THE INFANTA

(TRANSLATED FROM VICTOR HUGO)

SHE is so little—in her hand a rose;
A stern duenna watches where she goes.
What sees she? Ah, she knows not—the clear shine
Of waters shadow'd by the birch and pine.
What lies before?—a swan with silver wing,
The wave that murmurs to the branch's swing,
Or the deep garden flourishing below?
Fair as an angel frozen into snow,
The royal child looks on, and hardly seems to know.

As in a depth of glory far away,
Down the green park, a lofty palace lay.
There drank the deer from many a crystal pond,
And the starr'd peacock gemm'd the shade beyond.

Around that child all nature seem'd more bright,
Her innocence was as an added light.
Rubies and diamonds strew'd the path she trode,
And jets of sapphire from the dolphins flow'd.
Still at the water's side she holds her place.
Her bodice bright is set with Genoa lace;
O'er her rich robe, through every satin fold,
Wanders an arabesque in threads of gold.
From its green urn the rose, unfolding grand,
Weighs down the exquisite smallness of her hand.
And when the child bends to the red leaf's tip
Her laughing nostril and her carmine lip,
The royal flower purpureal kissing there
Hides more than half that young face, bright and fair,
So that the eye, deceived, can scarcely speak
Where shows the rose, or where the rose-red cheek;
Her eyes look bluer from their dark brown frame—
Sweet eyes, sweet form, and Mary's sweeter name.
All joy, enchantment, perfume, waits she there,
Heaven in her glance, her very name a prayer.

Yet 'neath thy sky, and before life and fate,
Poor child, she feels herself so vaguely great.
With stately grace she gives her presence high
To dawn, to spring, to shadows flitting by,
To the dark sunset glories of the heaven,
And all the wild magnificence of even:
On nature waits, eternal and serene,
With all the graveness of a little queen.
She never sees a man but on her knee;
She Duchess of Brabant one day will be,
And rule Sardinia, or the Flemish crowd—
She is the Infanta, five years old, and proud.

Thus it is with king's children, for they wear
A shadowy circlet on their foreheads fair;
Their tottering steps are toward a kingly chair.
Calmly she waits, and breathes her gather'd flower
Till one shall cull for her imperial power.
Already her eye saith, 'It is my right';
Even love flows from her mingled with affright.
If some one, seeing her so fragile stand,
Were it to save her should put forth his hand,
Ere he had made a step, or breath'd a vow,
The scaffold's shadow were upon his brow.

While the child laughs, beyond the bastion thick
Of that vast palace, Roman Catholic,
Whose every turret like a mitre shows,
Behind the lattice something fearful goes.
Men shake to see a shadow from beneath,
Passing from pane to pane, like vapoury wreath;
Pale, black, and still, it glides from room to room,
Or stands a whole day, motionless in its gloom,
In the same spot, like ghost upon a tomb,
Or glues its dark brow to the casement wan,
Dim shade that lengthens as the night draws on.
Its step funereal lingers like the swing
Of passing bell—'tis death, or else the king.

'Tis he, the man by whom men live or die;
But could one look beyond that phantom eye,
As by the wall he leans a little space,
And see what shadows fill his soul's dark place,
Not the fair child, the waters clear, the flowers
Golden with sunset — not the birds, the bowers—

No; 'neath that eye, those fatal brows that keep
The fathomless brain, like ocean dark and deep,
There, as in moving mirage, should one find
A fleet of ships that go before the wind:
On the foam'd wave, and 'neath the starlight pale,
The strain and rattle of a fleet in sail,
And through the fog an isle on her white rock,
Hearkening from far the thunder's coming shock.

Still by the water's edge doth silent stand
The Infanta, with the rosebud in her hand,
Caresses it with eyes as blue as heaven.
Sudden a breeze—such breeze as panting even,
From her full heart, flings out to field and brake—
Ruffles the waters, bids the rushes shake,
And makes through all their green recesses swell
The massive myrtle and the asphodel.
To the fair child it comes, and tears away
On its strong wind the rose-flower from the spray,

On the wild waters casts it, bruised and torn,
And the Infanta only holds a thorn.
Frighten'd, perplex'd, she follows with her eyes
Into the basin where her ruin lies,
Looks up to heaven, and questions of the breeze
That had not fear'd her Highness to displease.
But all the pond is changed—anon so clear,
Now black it swells as though with rage and fear;
A mimic sea, its small waves rise and fall,
And the poor rose is broken by them all;
Its hundred leaves, toss'd wildly round and round,
Beneath a thousand waves are whelm'd and drown'd—
It was a foundering fleet, you might have said.
Quoth the duenna, with her face of shade:
'Madam'—for she had mark'd her ruffled mind—
'All things belong to princes—but the wind.'

WILLIAM DERRY.
C. F. ALEXANDER.

THE ICE-BOUND SHIP

TO ADMIRAL SIR F. LEOPOLD M'CLINTOCK, K.C.B.

Various and manifold as they are vast
The glories whereunto men bend the knee,
And an exceeding glory is for thee;
Triumphant quietude of soul thou hast.
When now far futures shall lie in the past,
Thine, O my kinsman, partly thine shall be
Colossal epic of the frozen sea,
Pindaric passionate of the Northern blast.
O strongholds of the winter wild and lone,
O Balaklavas of the rolling ice,
O struggles on the sledge or in the yards,
Ye tell our England that of many a son
Like thee are borne victorious agonies
Magnificent as charges of the Guards.

I

Strike, strike the golden lyre,
Sound forth the measured praise of something higher
Than fair adventures be or battle's breath of fire—
Not tales that burn or thrill
So much as the unconquerable will,
The patience better than heroic pride.
Wherever this doth yet abide,
There is the making of a martyr still;
There is the gentleness that alone is great,
There is the purity inviolate,
There are the noble noiseless things
Whose genuine glory shall see out
The roses and the palms of emperors and kings.
Not with a battle-kindling fire,
Not to keep tune with war's sonorous shout,
Strike strike the golden lyre!

II

Nor let there want
Aught of a human pathos for the chant.
The heart is long in breaking,
The eye is long in weeping,

The strong man long in dying.
Never a flag is flying,
Never a pulse is leaping,
Never a sailor waking,
Never a moving hand
Within that dreadful land.
His sail is frozen to the mast.
He waits the world out aye in the glory white and vast.
The woman's heart at home is slow in breaking,
The woman's hair from day to day
Is slow in fading into gray.
Long, but at last the hope is dead;
Slow, but at last the last year comes for taking
The latest thin and silver thread.
Wherefore as ages come and go,
Lest other chronicles be lost
In that interminable frost,
In that eternal snow,
Strike, strike the golden lyre!

III

Strike then, and as thou strikest proclaim
An unimaginable fame

For those who wrought
A Waterloo without a wound,
A Trafalgar with no triumphant sound.
A strain be sought
Suiting the wondrous lights
Of all the starry Arctic nights,
Simple as was their faith
Yet rising mountainously high
In its sublime simplicity.
In the default of war, their death
Was something that was higher,—
Strike, strike the golden lyre!

IV

How shall we bury him?
Where shall we leave the old man lying?
With music in the distance dying—dying
Among the arches of the Abbey grand and dim;
There, if we might, we would bury him;
And comrades of the sea should bear his pall;
And the great organ should let rise and fall
The requiem of Mozart, the 'Dead March' in *Saul.*

Then, silence all!
And yet far grandlier will we bury him.
Strike the ship-bell slowly—slowly—slowly!
Sailors! trail the colours half-mast high;
Leave him in the face of God most holy,
Underneath the vault of Arctic sky.
Let the long, long darkness wrap him round,
By the long sunlight be his forehead crown'd.
For cathedral panes ablaze with stories,
For the tapers in the nave and choir,
Give him lights auroral—gird with glories
Mingled of the rose, and of the fire.
Let the wild winds like chief mourners walk,
Let the stars burn o'er his catafalque.

. . . . .

V

And must we say—if all the truth be told—
'His life was but a failure, a wrong guess'?
Hush! be not overbold.
Who dares to talk about success
In presence of that solemn blessedness?
Who, but God, dares to give a martyr gold?
Hush! Oh leave him in the darkness of the land,

Cover'd with the shadow of Christ's hand;
Leave him in the midnight Arctic sun,
God's great light o'er duty nobly done,
God's great whiteness for the pardon won;
Leave him waiting for the setting of the Throne,
Leave him waiting for the trumpet to be blown,
In God's bosom, in a land unknown.
Leave him (he needeth no lament)
With suns, and nights, and snow;
Life's tragedy is more magnificent,
Ending with that sublime and silent woe.
'Tis well it should be so.

Brave hearts! ye cannot stay;
Only at home ye will be sure to say
How he has wrought and sought, and found
—found what?
The bourne whence traveller returneth not!
Ah no! 'tis only that his spirit high
Hath gone upon a new discovery,
A marvellous passage on a sea unbounded,
Blown by God's gentle breath;
But that the white sail of his soul has rounded
The promontory—Death!

Scriptural and Devotional

FUNERAL OF JACOB

And up the stream of days he seem'd to float,
And twice seven years was toiling for his wife:
And all his thought lay heaving like a boat
On the long swell of life.

How statue-like that shape in shadows deep—
Like one of marble in the minster's rest,
With a pale babe—not dead, but gone to sleep
For ever on her breast.

And the white mother's breast may seem to heave,
And the white babe to feel about her face;
'Tis but our restless hearts that thus deceive
The quiet of the place.

And Rachel look'd upon her Israel,—wann'd
Like a white flower with the summer rain,
So she with sweat of child-birth,—her thin hand
Laid in his hand again.

Near Ephrath there's a pillar'd tomb apart;
It throws a shadow on her where she lies—
And she, a shadow on her husband's heart,
Of household memories.

So slowly upward did the cold death creep
From foot to face with its strange lines of white,
Like foam-streaks on a river dark and deep,
Lash'd by the winds all night.

By the rough brook of life no more he wrestles,
Huddling its hoarse waves until night depart;
No more the pale face of a Rachel nestles
Upon his broken heart.

Hush'd is the song, the tribesmen all are bless'd,
According to his blessing, every one;
But still the old man's spirit may not rest
Until he charge each son—

Not where the Pharaohs lie, with incense breathed
Round awful galleries, grim with shapes of wrath,

Hawk - headed, vulture - pinioned, serpent-wreathed,
Hued like an Indian moth— .

But lay him where from forest or green slope
To Mamre's cave the low wind breatheth balm,
Chanteth a litany of immortal hope,
Singeth a funeral psalm.

Like a tall ship that beareth slow and proud
A fallen chief, for pall and plume in motion,
The death-dark topmast and the death-like shroud
Pass o'er the quiet ocean.

Silent the helmsman stands beside the wheel,
Silent the mariners in their watches wait,
And a great music rolls before the keel
As through an abbey gate :

Like that tall ship, a grand procession comes
Up from old Father Nile to Hebron's hill ;
But no dead march is beat upon the drums,
And every trump is still.

Heartsore, and footsore with the march of life—
Soldier of God, whose fields were foughten well,
Resteth him from the cumbrance and the strife
World-wearied Israel.

Still it sails onward, where the Red Sea fills
With snowy drift of shells his coral bowers,
On through the wondrous land of rose-red hills
To that of rose-red flowers:

The land where aye, through many a purple gap,
The wanderer sees a mountain wall upspring,
And ever in his ear the wild waves flap
Like a great eagle's wing.

Ever I walk with that funereal train—
The stars shine over it for tapers tall,
And Jordan's music is the requiem strain
Drawn out from fall to fall.

Come, O thou south wind! with thy fragrance faint,
Bring from those folded forests on thy breath
Balm for the mummy, lying like a saint
Upon his car of death.

Bear him, ye bearers! lay him down at last
In still Machpelah, down by Leah's side—
On that pale bridegroom shimmering light is cast,
Laid by that awful bride.

THE HARP AND THE NORTH WIND[1]

Still as King David's bed
By that poetic head
Was pressed, much aching with its stately care,
O'er him his kinnor hung,
The silver nails among,
For the sweet sake of old companionship in prayer.

Doth not the soldier keep
A stiller hour of sleep
Because the good sword near him is so sharp,
Because he sees it gleam,
Come what there may in dream?
Why should not poet rest gentlier beneath his harp?

[1] A harp used to hang above David's bed. At midnight the north wind blew among the strings so that they sounded of themselves. David arose and busied himself with the Torah, until the pillar of the dawn ascended.—*Talmud.* B. Berachoth, 3 *b*.

Yet, after all, for us,
Earth's poets sleeping thus,
Harps are but golden silences at best;
Bright may be star or moon,
But harps without a tune
Of all that makes their life lovely are dispossess'd.

But what if some wind's low
Touches should come and go
Over the chords, and, seeming but caprice,
Should yet repass and die
To live eternally,
The Æolian impulse fixed in some immortal piece?

When other winds were laid
In Kedron's olive glade,
A North-wind from some far-off country came,
Rippled through every string
Above the poet-king,
And made a gentle noise much like a little flame.

A noise along the chords,
Fitting itself to words,
Not proud and perfect, made for mortal praise,

Like the Hellenic line,
For ivy hued like wine,
And crocuses ablaze with all their golden rays,

But broken with sweet art
To suit a broken heart,
Fierce, passionate, pregnant—if superb
Only with lights that lie
On dim-peak'd prophecy,
Only with gleams that leap out of some pictured verb.

Once to the North-wind's stir,
The harp's interpreter,
A boy came forth unstain'd by loves or wars,
And sang 'neath the night-sky
A song that will not die
Till heaven has lost its moon and company of stars.

Once did it swell and form
Into a psalm of storm,
With 'Gloria in Excelsis' it began—
Through it seven thunders roll;
For ending of the whole
A 'Pax in terris' falls soft on the ear of man [1]

[1] Ps. xxix.

Again the North-wind flowed,
And then some tiny ode
Came in divine completeness through the palms—
Perfect in little found,
A flawless diamond,
A rosebud verse of praise, a violet of the psalms.

Yet again after this,
Half his and half not his,
Came words of heav'n that yet most human were—
Lo! as he sighs and prays,
He fashions many a phrase
That lives in every age on every lip of prayer.

There went forth fragments then,
Fitting all lips of men,
As universal as our human sighs,
The language of each heart
That ever spoke apart
To God and to itself, waiting for sure replies.

Was that a cloud which rose
Over the king's repose,
A silver shower that patter'd in his ears?—
A shower, but not of rain,
A low-hung cloud of pain
That weeps itself away in penitential tears.

The North-wind's wondrous skill
Sounds more pathetic still,
As if a whole world that had lost its way,
With cut feet and wet cheek,
Should to the mute heav'n speak
Things that we all have felt, but none has dared to say.

Sometimes the music moved
As round a form it loved,
Now lit, now lost, upon high broken grounds,
Here circled with the thorn,
There with the rays of morn,
Here crested with the light, there crimson as with wounds.

Like all high song, it keeps
True concert with what weeps,

Yet loses not the joy beneath the woe,
As after suns have set,
The forest tangles get
A bar of golden light, and will not let it go.

At last the North-wind fails,
The dying music wails,
And the king looks towards the eastern hill;
Expectantly he waits
To see at morning's gates
The orient realms of rose and deeps of daffodil

Unfolding to his touch,
Because his song was such
That while dawn wakes earth's monarchs with its breath,
David awakes the dawn
High on the sacred lawn
With his mysterious tune, his dawn-flushed Ayyeleth.[1]

[1] Ps. xxii. Title.

PSALM LXVIII[1]

I

Rise up, Lord,
And let Thine enemies be scattered,
And let them that hate Thee flee before Thee!
As the dispersion of smoke-drift,
Thou wilt disperse them abroad;
As the wax in its weakness melts off
From before the face of the fire,
So our foes—the unrighteous—shall perish
From before the Face of our God,
But the just shall exult and be glad.

[1] It has sometimes seemed to me as if the *spirit* of the psalms might be more livingly conveyed to English readers by a style somewhat akin to that which is here attempted. These specimens indeed somewhat fail to bring out the strict parallelism of the original; but they retain in measure a *numerous* prose, and in the higher passages are helped by a faint colouring of rhyme. These observations only apply to one aspect of the psalm—the *poetical*. The *sacred* must be marked by the ecclesiastical rhyme, or by an archaic and majestic prose.

II

Chant ye to God!
Sing psalms of praise to His name!
The awful Rider extol ye,
Who rides on the raven-black clouds,
By His changeless immutable Name
Of JAH—and exult ye before Him.
—A Father of orphans bereavèd;
A Judge that gives sentence of good
To the silent life of the widow,
Is God in His holy abode.
—God maketh the lonely ones
To sit in a home of their own;
He bringeth the fetter'd ones forth,
To places happy and free:
Only the rebels must dwell
In a land blanched white by the sun.

III

I

God! when Thou wentest forth before Thy people,
Proceeding on Thy stately march
Across the desert steppes,
Trembled the earth and quaked:

Yea—the heavens dropped before the Face of
God,
—This Sinai's self before the Face of God,
The God of Israel.
The free aspersion of a rain of gifts
Priestlike Thou wavedst to and fro, O God!
Thy heritage, forlorn and sick at heart,
Thou didst establish. So in that lone land
The armies of Thy chosen dwelt long years.
Thou with Thy goodness for the needy ones
Didst so establish, God!

2

Suddenly His signal gives the Lord.
Those who tell, in every coast,
Tidings of great joy, and high
Annunciation of good things
Multiply, a countless host
Of women, full of glorious boast;
Kings of armies fly—they fly
Like the birds with fluttered wings.
She who kept the house that day
For her lord, at war away,
Shares the spoils of victory.

—Ha! ye warriors, once so bold,
Ye lie down by the cattle-fold;
And ye see in your homes beside ye a sheen,
Like the wings of a dove in the sunshine glint,
That are covered o'er with a silver tint;
Her feathers all lit with a manifold
Vibration and shooting of yellow gold,
That passes, the woof of the plumes between,
To a colour of strange and paling green.
—When, from many a field of war,
Kings the Almighty scatters far,
Through our dark estate of woe
—As o'er Salmon's forest line,
Night-black where the shadows are,
Shows that silver gleam divine—
Comes a sudden intense glow,
Like the gleam of new-fallen snow.

3

Mountain of God! mountain of Bashan!
Mountain of summits! mountain of Bashan!
Why watch ye, with a scowl upon your fore-
heads,
Ye mountains, with your summits arching
grand?

Here the mountain which our God hath chosen
For a habitation in the land,
Yea—to dwell there while the ages stand!
Chariots of our God are twice ten thousand,
Thousands told again and yet again:
And the Lord's Great Presence is among them
Here in Sion, as in Sinai then.
Thou hast gone up on high,
Thou hast captive led captivity,
Thou hast received gifts for men;
Yea—for rebels, who allegiance owed,
That the Lord God may have meet abode.

IV

Bless'd be the Lord,
Day after day!
Whoever loads us with sorrow,
God is our Saviour for aye.
This God is to us the God
Of Salvation—and of Him the Lord
Out of death are manifold issues:
Surely He will bruise
The very head of His foes,
And the hairy scalp of such an one
As walketh on still in his sin.

Saith the Lord: 'I will bring thee from Bashan;
I will bring thee again
From the dark, voiceful depths of the sea;
That thou thy footsteps mayst dash,
Red-wetshod, in blood of the foe,
And the tongue of thy dogs in the same.'

v

They are seen—Thy goings, O God!—
Thy goings, my God and my King!
In the place which is holy to Thee.
First, went the song-men in front,
Behind, those who strook the strings,
In the midst the choir of the maidens,
Who skill the tabrets to beat.
In the full assemblies, O bless ye
God the Lord, ye souls
That well forth in living waves,
From Israel's fountain-head!
Benjamin's tribe is there;
Small, but his chief at his head.
The princes of Judah are there,
With their goodly company;
The princes of Zebulun,
And the princes of Naphtali.

VI

Thy God assureth thee strength,
Strengthen, O God! Thy decree,
The things Thou workest for us,
Because of Thy palace, which hangs
Dominant over Jerusalem.
So shall kings bring presents to Thee!
Rebuke the thronging mass
Of the men who hold the lance—
The swarming horde of the bisons,
The young steers among the herds
That are nations of mighty men—
Till they move themselves restlessly forward,
With tribute of silver bars.
He has scattered the hordes of nations
Whose will is the onset of war.
—Nobles shall come out of Egypt,
And Cush—his hands in haste
Shall yet be uplifted to God.

VII

Sing ye to God,
Earth's kingdoms!--sing psalms to the Lord!
To Him who rides forth
On the heaven of heavens eterne.

Behold! He gives forth His voice,
And that a voice of strength.
Ascribe ye strength to God,
His loftiness is over Israel;
His strength abides above,
Where the thin clouds fleck the sky.
Terrible art Thou, O God!
From Thy sanctuaries—Israel's God!—
Giving strength and strong defences
To the nation. Blessed be God!

PSALM CIV[1]

I

BLESS the Lord, O my soul!
O Lord, my God!
Very great hast Thou been.
Splendour and majesty
Thou hast put on as a robe;
Thou hast arrayed Thee with light
For Thy lucent vesture of wear,
Outspreading the heavens on heavens,
As the tremulous veil of a curtain.[2]

[1] 'This beautiful Psalm is at once felt to be a poetical imitation of the first chapter of Genesis. But the writer does not propose to give a bare recital of facts. He wishes to found upon them the praise of the Creator. As Moses divides the work of God into *six days*, the poet traces *six pictures*. The *first* corresponds to the First Day's work. God made the Light. But the poet speaks, not of the physical creation of the light, but of light considered as a symbol of the Divine Majesty.'—REUSS, *in loc.*

[2] כִּירִיעָה—from a verb which signifies 'to wave and flutter.'

—He who archeth and layeth the beams
Of His lofty chamber of Presence
On the floor of the waters above.
—Who setteth the clouds
Thick-encompassing, dense,
For the battle-car of His march.
—Who walketh on wings of the wind,
Who maketh His angels
As swift as the sweep of the storm-winds,
As strong as the flame of the fire.

II

Thou hast built up the marvellous building
Of earth on foundations that shall not
Be shaken for ever and aye;
Thou didst mantle it once with the deep,
Sheer up o'er the hills stood the waters,
—They recoil'd because Thou didst chide them.
From the crashing voice of Thy thunder
They trembled and hasted away;
Ascended the mountains,
Descended the valleys,
To the place Thou hadst founded for them:
The line of their border Thou settest

Which their proud waves must never pass o'er;
Must never return in their anger,
To mantle the wide earth again.

III

Thou sendest in freedom away
The bright springs into the river;
In the glens, the mountains between,
They walk for ever and aye.
They give drink to each beast of the field;
The wild asses quench the fierce fire
Of the thirst that is on them therein.
Beside them the fowl of the heaven
Abide; and out from among
The Apriling green of the branches [1]
They give earth the gift of a voice.
From Thy lofty chamber of Presence
Thou makest the mountain to drink.
By the fruitful issue that comes
Of Thy works, the earth shall be filled.

[1] עֲפִי, *leafage*, from a root עָפָה, to be luxuriantly covered with leaves and flowers. (Aram. עֲבָא, Arab. عفي. Cf. *Apr*il. See Fuerst, *Concord. Hebr.*, p. 852.)

He causeth the sprouting of grass,
Green herb for the service of man,
To bring forth bread from the earth,
And wine shall give gleams of its gladness
To man's heart, and brighten his face
Beyond all the richness of oil,
And man's heart the bread will uphold.
The happy trees of the Lord
Stand satisfied, even the cedars
Lebanonian, planted by Him;
There the chirping birds build their nests;
But the good and home-loving stork—
Her house the cypresses are.
The mountains, earth's high ones, uplifted
Are there for the wild goats to climb,
And the crags are a refuge for conies.[1]

IV

He made the wan yellow moon
To mark the vespers for aye

[1] 'This delightful picture of nature, just twice the length of the previous strophe, is more deeply interesting, because it is almost *unique* in the Old Testament. Oriental poetry in general, and even classical poetry, is not in the habit of drinking deeply from this inexhaustible source of beauty. —Reuss, *in loc.*

Of the times as they come in their order;[1]
And the bright sun, that knoweth so well
His unfailing succession of sunsets.
Thou settest the darkness. Comes night,
And in it will creep
All the teeming life of the thicket.
The young lions roar for their prey,
And seek for their food from their God.
Breaks forth at his bright birth the sun.
They gather and muster themselves,
And in their lairs they crouch down.
Man goes forth to his work,
To his service until the evening.

V

How many Thy works—O Jehovah!
In wisdom all of them made.
The earth is full to the utmost
Of an ample possession of Thine:
And yonder, the sea that is grand
And wide with its infinite spaces.

[1] To a religious Hebrew it was rather the moon than the sun which marked the seasons, as the calendar of the Church was regulated by it.

There are moving things without number,
The little lives and the vast.
There the stately ships walk on,
And there the whale Thou hast fashioned
To take his pastime therein.

VI

Hush'd in expectance, all these
Look forth and wait upon Thee,
To give them their food in its season;
And ever Thou givest it freely:
Thou openest divinely Thy Hand—
They are satisfied fully with good!
But when Thou hidest Thy face,
They are troubled, and restlessly shudder.
Their spirits Thou gatherest in,
They breathe out the breath of their life,
And unto their dust will return.
—Thou wilt send forth
In solemn procession Thy Spirit,
And the work of creation will grow,
And Thou wilt make young and renew[1]
The sorrow-worn face of the earth.

[1] Literally, of the abiding continuance, the immortality of species; spiritually, of the resurrection of dead souls and of the great renovation ever in progress.

VII [1]

His glory shall be through the ages,
The Lord shall be glad in His works.
If He do but look on the earth,
It trembles exceedingly sore.
If He touch the mountains, they smoke.
I will sing to the Lord in my life.
I will lift up psalms to my God
While my soul can call itself *I*.[2]
My thought shall be sweet in His sight.[3]
I will be glad in the Lord.
From this fair earth the sinner shall cease,
And yet in the space of the years [4]
The wicked shall not be there.
Bless the Lord, O my soul!
HALLELUJAH.[5]

[1] 'As the author did not wish to stop with the idea of the Sabbath-rest, the seventh strophe is consecrated to a poetic peroration. It is linked to the last verse of the first chapter of Genesis, which says that God saw that everything He had made was very good.'—REUSS.

[2] Ver. 33. Literally, *during me.* [3] ἡδυνθείη αὐτῷ, LXX.

[4] The Psalmist strains forward in spirit to the great regeneration, the new Heavens and *New Earth*, wherein dwelleth righteousness.—'Ita ut vel conversi ad Dominum non sint amplius peccatores, vel si converti noluerint, dejiciantur infra terram, et ultra non compareant.'—BELLARM. in ver. 35.

[5] No Hallelujahtic Psalm is ever attributed to David.

SHIYR SHYRIYM

TWO INTERPRETERS

I READ the *Song of Songs*—I thought it pure,
The very flame of the full love of God;
And over it there hung the clear obscure
Of Syrian night, and scents were blown abroad
Whose very names breathe on us mystic breath—
Myrrh, and the violet-striped habatseleth.

Strange words of beauty hung upon mine ear—
Semadar, that is scent and flower in one
Of the young vine-blooms in the prime of the year;
Senir, Amana, Carmel, Lebanon,
Eloquent of rivers and of mountain trees,
Dim in the Oriental distances.

And purple paradise of pomegranate flowers,
Kopher, kinnámon, balsam, wealth of nard,
And things that thickets fill in summer hours,
Blue as a sky white-clouded, golden-starr'd,
Whereby we may surmise not far from thence
Mountains of myrrh and hills of frankincense.

I read the Hebrew late into the night;
At last the lilies faded, and the copse
Had no more fragrance, and I lost delight,
As when in some sweet tongue a poem stops,
Half understood—yet being once begun,
Our hearts are strangely poorer when 'tis done.

Two volumes lay before me. One a tome
Which heretofore for years had stood between
Tender Augustine, terrible Hierome;
And the last Father's name was duly seen
In faded letters betwixt leather thongs—
Saint Bernard's Sermons on the Song of Songs.

The other, fresh from Paris, *Le Cantique,*
Look'd a thin volume of a new romance.

Yet did I pray, 'O Spirit whom I seek,
Teach me by which of these two lights of France
The unbegun Beginning I may reach,
Thy sweetest novelty in oldest speech.'

I.—M. RENAN'S INTERPRETATION

So the two books I read; the first whereof,
A drama of earth's flame this song did deem—
Five acts with epilogue, sweet tale of love,
Shepherd and vine-dresser—such shiyr shyriym
Idyllic as Theocritus might trill—
Say rather, a soft Hebrew vaudeville.

Solomon sweeps by with threescore mighty men,—
Poor dove, all fluttering in the falcon's beak,
So foully carried from her quiet glen!
He flashes on with her so sweetly weak,
Elderly, evil-eyed, and evil-soul'd,
Scented and cruel in a cloud of gold.[1]

[1] Cant. III. 6-11. M. Renan, *Étude sur le Cantique*, pp. 31, 190, 191.

To the accursèd palace they have come.
Dresses like rainbows float through the Harem.
To the faint plash of fountains never dumb
Are sung wild songs of earth's unholiest flame.
The large-eyed odalisks are lolling there;
The tambour taps, and bounds the bayadère.

Ah! as in dreams her shepherd singing stands:
'Arise, my love, my fair one, come away;
The winter has pass'd over into lands
Whose heritage is rain, whose heavens are gray.
Flow'rs for my flow'r, the turtle's voice is heard—
It is the green time for the singing bird.

'The exhalation of the vine-bloom flows
On the rich air. Why is my white dove mute
In the cleft of the rock? Behold, the fig-tree throws
Her aromatic heart into her fruit.

Save for me only spring is everywhere.
O let me hear thee from thy mountain stair.

Which hearing, in her heart she hums her lilt,
Learnt long ago of some dark vine-dresser.
Sing it, O maiden, whensoe'er thou wilt.
The vine-leaf shadow o'er thee is astir—
'Let not the little foxes from thee 'scape,
Spoiling our vines that have the tender grape.'

And so, O peasant girl, be won for wife.
No young Theresa of the Hebrews thou;
Yet an illusion traverses thy life
Which gives ideal light to thy dark brow,
Which makes home beautiful, and proudly sings
Songs of defiant purity to kings.

And if no ecstasy lights up thy face,
No flame of seraphim consumes thy heart;
If thou hast natural truth, not heavenly grace—
At least, O sunburnt Shulamite! thou art
A tender witness to a purer lot
In the base centuries when love was not.

I smiled a moment. Then a discontent
Filled me with grief and spiritual shame.
'Where, then?' I cried, 'is the old ravishment,
The ointment pour'd forth of the Holiest Name?
This song was once as fair for souls to mark
As the sod fresh cut to the prison'd lark—

'A daisied sod whereon the bird in rapture
Quivers, remembering a little while
The large inheritance before his capture,
When from some azure and unmeasured mile
He rain'd down music, where the shadows pass
From the white cloud-sails o'er the glittering grass.'

II.—ST. BERNARD'S INTERPRETATION

'Whence skillest thou,' his brother Girard said,
'To trace these love-links every feast and fast?
Thou hast not much perused the deathless dead,
Yet shall these words of thine for ever last—

Little in space, but sparks of living flame,
Small buds indeed, but roses all the same.

'And happy we, to whom in thee are given
Such sweets both new and old, such lily flowers,
Such precious antepast of feasts of heaven.
High joy for us of these monastic bowers,
To gather on this green Burgundian lea
Thy pale gold honey, blossom-haunting bee.

'I know not, brother,' and the Abbot smiled;
'Yet thou rememberest the forest well.
A few years since the snow was on it piled.
Thou knowest how often ere the vesper-bell
My meditation was prolonged—and ye
Said it was sweet—perchance in flattery.

'Nathless the young narcissus snowdrops came
With spring (our rustics call them "angels' tears");
A hundred greens were out, no two the same;
The happy promise given by young years
For ever, and for evermore belied,
Lit the young leaves, and smiled some hours and died.

'So came the spring to Burgundy. Then spoke
A voice from out the depths where earth's life stirs,
The *Song of Songs* reads well under the oak—
A soft interpretation sigh the firs;
And God's good Spirit taught me what to teach
Through the uncountable whispers of the beech.

'From the anemones pass'd to me my thought,
Through the woods trembling in their thin white robe
A subtler music came to me unsought
Upon the washing of the murmurous Aube;
And the long sunset rays on the great boles
Wrote me the comment of the holy souls.[1]

'For were the Canticle a passion strain,
And if it spake of aught beneath the sky,
Then from its images thy heart could gain
A love-snatch only, or a botany;
Whereas, he finds in it who truly tries,
Strength from the strong, and wisdom from the wise.

[1] 'Nullos se magistros habuisse nisi quercus et fagos joco gratioso inter amicos dicere solet.'—ST. BERNARD, *Vita*, opp. iv. 240.

'Here is the ocean of the love divine
For the whole Church. What smaller than a sea
Can hold a sea? and yet thy heart and mine
Reflection of it hath for thee and me,
As one clear bubble sphereth for the eye
The azure amplitude of wave and sky.

'And this love-strain is never overtold.
When God Himself is our musician, say,
Wilt thou correct Him to a strain less bold,
And teach the mighty Master how to play?
Two, two alone can hear these tender things—
The soul that listens, and the soul that sings.'

SEMADAR

[The rare quadriliteral (סְמָדַר S'mādăr) is found in Cant. II. 13-15; VII. 13. The highest Rabbinical authorities consider that from its derivation the word includes both the blossom and its scent. Thus it is richer than the pretty Greek *ὀνάνθη* by which it is here translated by the LXX., and which seems to have been more pleasant to Pindar and the Greek dramatists.]

Semadar, quoth a Rabbi thus,
'Odor et idem flosculus.'

I

Heavily my desk upon
Lay a Hebrew Lexicon.
As I pried into the tome
I thought me of Saint Hierome,
By the Jew tormented sore
With his strange triliteral lore,—

Words that hiss and pant are those,
Torture of the throat and nose.[1]
Fine of scent and fleet of foot,
Coldly obstinate in pursuit,
Must he be who hunts the root.
I too, weary and athirst,
Try the game in volume vast,
Where the thousandth page is first,
And the first leaf is the last.

II

So I fell to muse on words.
Ships they are, methought, that bear
Cargoes sometimes passing rare;
Little harps with magic chords;
Hives that hide and hush the bees
Who in the far summers wrought
Sweetest honey of man's thought;
Little song-enfolding birds.
But behold! upon the seas
In some voyage the ship is lost;

[1] 'Stridentia anhelantiaque verba,' exclaims the Saint in disgust.

And the chords one day are broken;
And the dead bird, mute, is moss'd,
The wan wood-leaves o'er it toss'd;
And away the bees have fled,
And the word becomes unspoken.
O the grief, or soon or late,
When a language lieth dead,
When the hope and love and hate,
And the laughter and the wrath
Multitudinous that it hath,
Out of life have perishèd,—
Influences half-divine,
Teaching how to do and think,
Levigated to a line,
Dungeon'd in a drop of ink.

III

Yet the lost once more is found,
When the happy hour arrives.
By the deep, dark sea undrown'd,
Lovely thoughts and lofty lives
Rise superbly from the wreck,
Move once more upon the deck:

Cithern-chords are strung again,
Summer hums about the hives:
The tiny skeleton doth flit,
Flashing musical and lit
With the new-born life of it:
The speech becomes a speech of men.

IV

Semadar! Let the word
With the breath of life be stirr'd.
Soft! The poet-king withdrawn,
Hush'd in a sweet world of thought,
With the music he hath wrought,
Like his psalmist-sire awakes
The red pillars of the dawn,—
And an earlier morning takes
Than the first flash on the lakes,
Or the first-lit laughter-spell
Of the sea uncountable.
To his fancy comes and goes
Softer scent than that which throws
The remembrance of a rose;
Many a delicate blossom makes
Along the vineyard-line adust

Promise of a red, divine,
Wondrous exuberance of wine.
All the Syrian vault of blue;
All the dim delightful changes,—
The broad vine-leaves pictured through
Sunset's fierce and red-gold rust,
Moonlights on the mountain-ranges—
Where the scent is sweeter growing,
Where the blossom daintier blowing,
Scent and blossomry in one;
Both, and all the Orient round
Sphered and circled in a sound—
Quicken in your Lexicon,
Semadar—and the thing is done!

V

So it is. Then who shall doom
To the language of the dead
Words with holier meaning said?
In Semadar is there pent
Of the passionate Orient
Half the beauty and the scent?
In its little exquisite tomb
Waiting but a touch to leap
Lovely from its centuried sleep,—

Sure in its own turn to find
Summer in some happy mind !—
Words that once were sent abroad
From nearer to the Heart of God :
Full of sap and fierce with life,
Sweet for love and strong for strife.
Not all ages intervening
Disenchant them of their meaning.
Heaven and earth shall pass away,
Nevermore such words as they.
Be it near, or be it far,
Better resurrections are
For such words beneath the sun,—
Sweet with an eternal sweetness,
Strong with an eternal strength,
Finished with a full completeness ;
Sure from out the pedant's page,
From beneath the wrecks of age,
Sure to waken up at length—
Splendid with their victory won,—
Triumphant from the Lexicon !

HIS NAME

O WONDERFUL! round whose birth-hour
Prophetic song, miraculous power,
Cluster and burn, like star and flower.

Those marvellous rays that at Thy will,
From the closed Heaven which is so still,
So passionless, stream'd round Thee still,

Are but as broken lights that start,
O Light of Light, from Thy deep heart;
Thyself, Thyself, the wonder art!

O Counsellor! four thousand years,
One question tremulous with tears,
One awful question vex'd our peers.

They asked the vault—but no one spoke;
They asked the depth—no answer woke;
They asked their hearts that only broke.

They look'd, and sometimes on the height
Far off they saw a haze of white,
That was a storm, but look'd like light.

The secret of the years is read,
The enigma of the quick and dead,
By a Child's voice interpreted.

O everlasting Father! broad
Sun after sun went down, and trod
Race after race the green earth's sod,

Till generations seem'd to be
But dead waves of an endless sea,
But dead leaves of a deathless tree.

But Thou hast come, and now we know
Each wave hath an eternal flow,
Each leaf a lifetime after snow.

O Prince of Peace! crown'd and discrown'd,
They say no war nor battle's sound
Was heard the tired world around.

They say the hour that Thou didst come
The trumpet's voice was stricken dumb,
And no one beat the battle-drum.

And still as clouding questions swarm
Around our hearts, and dimly form
Their problems of the mist and storm;

As fleeting years seem poorly fraught
With broken words—wherefrom is wrought
Nevertheless love's loveliest thought—

Mere meaningless syllables chance-met,
Though in one perfect poem yet
Uninterrupted to be set;

And when not yet in God's sunshine
The smoke drifts from the embattled line
And shows the Captain's full design,

We bid our doubts and passions cease,
Our restless fears be still'd with these—
Counsellor, Father, Prince of Peace!

MUSIC OR WORDS?

(ON THE SEVEN LAST WORDS)

I

And is it well what one hath said?—
'Ye who shall watch beside my bed,
Get music, not so much to swell
As to be half inaudible,
Around my agony. While ye wait
My passing through the shadowy gate,
Speak me no word articulate.

'Touch for me, touch some tremulous
chords—
Touch,—I am weary of all words—
Of hearing, be it e'er so sweet,
What hath capacity of deceit.
Let then my spirit on life's brink
Some undeceiving music drink,
And so it shall be well, I think.

'Speak me no words—the poet sings
That all our human words have wings.
Ah! if those wings at times attain
A golden splash on their dark grain
From some blue sky-cleft far away,
They mostly wear the black or grey
That doth beseem the bird of prey.

'Speak then no words—but some soft air
Play; as it scarcely ripples there,
Or, rather say, as its true wing
With silver over-shadowing
Throbs—and no more—my soul beneath
Shall pass without one troubled breath
From sleep to dreams, from dreams to death.

'Wherefore be utter'd words kept far,
Such as may that dim music mar,
That exquisite vagueness finely brought,
A gentle anodyne to thought—
Speak me not any words, O friend!
At least one moment at life's end
I want to feel, not comprehend.'

II

How many words since speech began
Have issued from the lips of man?
How few with an undying chant
The gallery of our spirits haunt,
And with immortal meanings twined
More precious welcome ever find
From the deep heart of human-kind?

Words that ring on world without end,
Words that all woe and triumph blend—
Broken, yet fragments where we scan
Mirror'd the perfect God and man;
Words whereunto we deem that even
All power because all truth is given—
We count of all the dearest seven.

O kingly silence of our Lord!
O wordless wonder of the Word!
O hush, that makes, while Heav'n is mute,
Music supreme and absolute!
Silence—yet with a sevenfold stroke
Seven times a wondrous bell there broke
Upon the Cross, when Jesus spoke.

One word, one priestly word, He saith—
The advocacy of the death,
The intercession by the Throne,
Wordless beginneth with that tone.
All the long music of the plea
That ever mediates for me
Is set upon the selfsame key.

One royal word—though love prevails
To hold Him faster than the nails,
And though the dying lips are white
As foam seen through the dusk of night:
That hand doth Paradise unbar,
Those pale lips tell of worlds afar
Where perfect absolutions are.

One word, one human word—we lift
Our adoration for the gift
Which proves that, dying, well He knew
Our very nature through and through.
Silver the Lord hath not, nor gold,
Yet His great legacy behold—
The Virgin to the virgin-soul'd.

Three hours of an unfathom'd pain,
Of drops falling like summer rain,
The earthquake dark like an eclipse—
Three hours the pale and dying lips
By their mysterious silence teach
Things far more beautiful than speech
In depth or height can ever reach.

One word, the *Eli* twice wail'd o'er—
'Tis anguish, but 'tis something more,
Mysteriously the whole world's sin,
His and not His, is blended in.
It is a broken heart whose prayer
Crieth as from an altar-stair
To One who is, and is not, there.

One word, one gentle word. In pain
He condescendeth to complain—
Burning, from whose sweet will are born
The dewinesses of the morn.
The Fountain which is last and first,
The Fountain whence life's river burst,
The Fountain waileth out, 'I thirst.'

One royal word of glorious thought,
A hundred threads are interwrought
In it—the thirty years and three,
The bitter travail of the Tree,
Are finished—finished, too, we scan
All types and prophecies—the plan
Of the long history of man.

One word, one happy word—we note
The clouds over Calvary float
In distances, till fleck or spot
In the immaculate sky is not;
And on the Cross peace falls like balm;
And the Lord's soul is yet more calm
Than the *commendo* of His psalm.

III

Word of the Priest, the one forgiver,
Word of the atonement wrought for ever,
Of Him who bore in depths unknown
The burden that was not His own;
Word of the human son and friend
That doth true human love commend
Until humanity shall end;

Word that bestow'd in one brief breath
The double gift of life and death—
Death to the sufferer sweet surprise,
Life in the lawns of Paradise;
Word in the passion-palm once writ,
And lo! earth's waters all are lit
Now with pathetic touch of it;

Word that breathes forth for aye sithence
Record of more than innocence,
The full assurance reach'd at length,
The laying hold upon a strength—
The resignation sweet and grand
Of self into a Father's hand.
Quietly passing from this land,

Be more to me at last, O words,
Than all that trembles from the chords!
Words that have no deceit or hate,
Be with me dying—I can wait,
If ye be with me on that day,
If your sweet strength within me stay,
A little for the harps to play.

REPENTANCE AND FAITH

THERE was a ship, one eve autumnal, onward
Steer'd o'er an ocean lake,
Steer'd by some strong hand ever as if sunward:
Behind, an angry wake;
Before there stretch'd a sea that grew intenser
With silver fire far spread
Up to a hill mist-gloried, like a censer
With smoke encompassèd:
It seem'd as if two seas were brink to brink,
A silver flood beyond a lake of ink.

There was a soul that eve autumnal sailing
Beyond the earth's dark bars,
Toward the land of sunsets never paling,
Toward Heaven's sea of stars;
Behind there was a wake of billows tossing,
Before, a glory lay.
O happy soul! with all sail set just crossing
Into the Far-away,
The gloom and gleam, the calmness and the strife,
Were death behind thee, and before thee life.

And as that ship went up the waters stately,
Upon her topmasts tall
I saw two sails, whereof the one was greatly
Dark as a funeral pall.
But oh, the next's pure whiteness who shall utter?
Like a shell-snowy strand,
Or when a sunbeam falleth through the shutter
On a dead baby's hand;
But both alike across the surging sea
Help'd to the haven where the bark would be.

And as that soul went onward, sweetly speeding
Unto its home and light,
Repentance made it sorrowful exceeding,
Faith made it wondrous bright;—
Repentance dark with shadowy recollections
And longings unsufficed,
Faith white and pure with sunniest affections
Full from the Face of Christ.
But both across the sun-besilver'd tide
Help'd to the heaven where the heart would ride.

THE WOUNDED SEA-BIRD

Look when thou walkest by the winter strand,
Hath it befallen thee, that through the gray
Of the sea mist, into thy very hand,
Floated a snow-white bird through the salt spray,
Fair, but deep wounded, bubbling from its beak
A thin red foam, with faint infántine shriek?

Which noting, to thyself thou mad'st a dirge—
'There is no healing in this hand of mine;
Here must thou die, by the unpitying surge;
Not in the long blue distances divine,
Not in thy little happiness upborne
On seas refulgent with the rosy morn.'

Such, and so sorely wounded, floating in,
Are penitents beside the sea of time:
Such, and so deep, the crimson stain of sin,
The scar we bear in this ungentle clime.
But lo! a healing Hand our wound above,
Strong as eternity, and soft as love.

And a sweet voice that unto us hath lent
A new beginning and a nobler flight.
So to poor hearts He gives incontinent
A larger liberty of golden light;
Makes more than expiation for our fault,
And arches over us His bluest vault,

Saying: 'I charge thee, O My wounded bird,
Soar nearer to the heaven where'er thou art;
By all the breezes let thy plumes be stirr'd;
I heal thee through and through, O bleeding heart!
I ask thy song, and give thee voice to sing;
I bid thee soar, and give thee strength of wing.

'What I command I give my mourners still,
Give the delight that doth the victory gain;[1]
Give first, and then command them as I will,
Sweet penitence taking pleasure in its pain.
I bid thee set those psalms of sorrow seven
To the allegro of the airs of Heaven.'

[1] *Victrix delectatio.*

IMPERFECT REPENTANCE

At such a time—full well I know within
Myself—I wrought a sin.
Light in the eye it had, and little sips
Of honey on the lips.
No sooner done but the light died, and all
The honey became gall.
Then was my soul stone-silent for a space
And whiteness wann'd my face.

After a little then again I heard
The music of the word,
And took the absolution sweet and grand
Into my own faith's hand,
And breathed the ozone in the healing breeze
Of sacramental seas.
Out rang my song: 'My sore distress doth cease,
Pardon I find and peace;
The very plenitude of Love divine
Unboundedly is mine.'

But lo! the step of Time steals slowly on,
And, ever and anon,
The spectre of the sin which I thought lost
Rises, no hated ghost.
Rather, 'How beautiful,' my spirit cries,
'O love! are those grey eyes.
What filmy robes float for me, what rich tunes,
Dim fields, and white half-moons.

'And, while some silver flax-rock in the brown
Rack is turn'd upside down,
The fine disorder'd threads and cloud-fluff thin
Are like thy hair, sweet sin!
And, as we pass, the faint scent rises yet
Of stock and mignonette,
Through the garden looking on the starlit sea—
And my sin kisseth me.
And twice as fair she is as ever of old,
Because not half so bold,—
The grossness of the sense and of the eye
Refined to memory;
The ethereal delicacy of the past
Over fact's coarse world cast
The flexile bough of fancy quivering on
After the bird is gone.'

Whereon I thought—'Alas! the heavy fall.
I am not changed at all.
Look how some fitful hour when smoky gray
Mountain-mists roll away,
The sunshine's magic and creative beams
Transform the white quartz-seams,
Whereof each one that glistens, being wetted,
Seemeth with diamonds fretted,
But, being dried and unlit, it is found
Mere stone, not diamond,—
So seem'd I like a saint upon God's hill
That am a sinner still.
Methought that I, out of the strong black jaw
And iron grasp of law,
Had pass'd over the poor earthly line
Into a land divine,
Where all things are made new, and grace redresses
Us with her tendernesses.
Ah! I who loved the living love its ghost,
And, loving, I am lost.

What shall I say?—that thoughts like these returning
Are scarcely worth the mourning,—

Nay, that they have a beauty in their place,
Disgracing not my grace,
Like green corn-ears ungilded of the suns
Bettering the golden ones?
Not this shall be my argument—but this:
'See lest thy crown thou miss;
And, that thou hear not one day bitter sentence,
Repent of thy repentance.'

TENEBRÆ

I

Sayest thou then to all that will to hearken:
'The Saint's star grows not dim,
But still through clouds that climb and deeps that darken
Is visible to him.

II

'Still when the sunset comes, He taketh order,
To whom the right belongs,
Sending His own away across the border,
Silverly and with songs'?

III

Nay! God prepares His kings for coronation
Not as might you or I,
And, being wondrous, works His preparation
For kingship wondrously.

IV

Not always is the triumph of the sainting
That which our hearts expect,
Tearfully, roughly, doubtingly, and fainting,
How many souls elect

V

Pass out to that within the lifted curtain,
Roughly into the smooth,
Doubtfully into the for ever certain,
The circumfulgent truth?

VI

Tearfully, tearfully, becoming tearless
When trouble's all but o'er,
Fainting when well they might at last be fearless,
Seeing they touch the shore;

VII

Questioning hard by the school unemulous
Where half our questions cease,
Scarcely a bow-shot off their beds, and tremulous
Upon the verge of peace;

VIII

Head dropping just before the crown is fitted,
Eyes dim at break of day,
Feet walking feebly through the meadows wetted
With April into May.

IX

Thanks if some dying light there be, some sweetness
To me and mine allow'd;
But if so be that human incompleteness
Compass us like a cloud,

X

Softly on me and mine, when that is ended,
Eternal light let fall,
And, after darkness, be our way attended
By light perpetual.

THE CHAMBER PEACE

A SUMMER night that blows,
Fragrant with hay and flowers, on copse and lawn;
A window muffled round and round with rose,
Fronting the flush of dawn.

O pilgrim, well is thee
Till the day break, and till the shadows cease,
Resting the faint heart and the failing knee,
In that sweet chamber, Peace.

The white moon through the trees
Sails—but thou singest to a heavenly tune,
'Needeth no sun the land my spirit sees,
Neither by night the moon.'

Before thine eyes half-closing
Like ink-black plumes their tops the willows shake;
Through them thou seest a little boat reposing
Upon a moonlit lake,

And 'O,' thou say'st, 'my soul
Was like those inky plumes the night-winds toss;
But now it hangs as in one silver roll
Over a hidden Cross.

'Ever on life's wild swell
My heart went drifting, drifting on remote,
But now within the veil 'tis anchor'd well,
Safe as that little boat.'

Or if the shower that lingers
In fleecy clouds of moonlight-tissued woof
Falls, and the soft rain with a hundred fingers
Taps on the chamber roof,—

'Christ,' the lone pilgrim saith,
'My Saviour, comes this heart's poor love to win.
Thy locks are fill'd with dew,' he murmureth,
'O that Thou wouldst come in!'

So rests the pilgrim ever,
Hearing at solemn intervals a swell,
Music as of a grandly falling river
On Hills Delectable.

So rests he till he knows
The morning redden in the eastern skies,
And fronts the unfolding of heaven's fiery rose,
The beautiful sunrise.

Another chamber yet—
The curtain is of grass, and closely drawn;
But the pale pilgrim, in its portal set,
Looketh toward the dawn.

And when the eves are calmest,
Up in the incense-laden aisles of lime,
Some sweet bird meditateth like a psalmist
Such song as suits the time.

So lay the pilgrim down—
Set thou his feet, and face, and closèd eyes,
Where they may meet the golden raying crown
Of Christ's august sunrise.

So let him rest, unheard
All faithless mourning; let thy murmur cease;
Translate the grave into a gentler word,
Call it the 'Chamber Peace.'

RECOGNITION[1]

And shall they say thou knowest me no more,
After this human flesh which we wear still,
Than I am known by light waves on the shore,
Or breezes blowing round a sunny hill?
Ah! there be some who bid us mourners dwell
With Nature's sympathies, so shall it be well.

Mystic condolences of morn and eve
Shall touch the heartache tenderly away,
The rivers and the great woods interweave
A consolation lips can never say;
And with the sighing of the summer sea
Come cadences that chant, 'We pity thee.'

It is not so; who truly mourn shall trace
Something sardonic in that fixed regard,
The quiet sarcasm of a great cold face
Staring for ever on, terribly starred—

[1] This poem was suggested by St. Bernard's lamentation for his brother Girard in his *Sermones in Cantia.*

A silver depth of delicate despair,
An uncompassionate silence everywhere.

How speaks that pitiless power impersonal?
I who stand stirless on the starlit tracts;
I who impalpably pervade the All;
I who am white on the long cataracts;
I through æonian centuries who perform
Instinct of spring, or impulse of the storm;

I in the greenwood who at May-time move
With straggling clouds of hyacinth dark blue;
Who neither laugh nor weep, nor hate nor love,
Who sleep at once and work, both old and new—
Work with such myriad wheels that interlace,
Sleep with such splendid dreams upon my face;—

When thou hast asked me, 'Are my loved ones near?
Surely this golden silence doth contain
Them deathlessly; their dim eyes hold some tear
Delicious, born not of the showers of pain'—
When thou hast questioned me at hush of eve,
What right hast thou to say that I deceive?

Perhaps they say, 'I pardon thee that wrong—
Nay, love thee more divinely for it all';
Perhaps they strengthen thee when thou art strong,
Perhaps they walk with thee when shadows fall.
But this is all I have for thee; the fair
Absolute certitude is other where.

Think'st thou of me bathed in the sea of bliss?
Art thou unmindful of me, holy mind?
Thou who of light hast entered the abyss,
Art thou with God's great splendour intertwined,
A chalice with His fulness filled too high
For wine-drops of earth's coloured memory?

Then must I think of thee, my darling, aye,
As I might think upon some lucent tide;
As I might think of some fair summer day,
Profuse of shadows on the mountain-side;
As I might think of the high snows far kenned,
A cold white splendid quiet without end?

Nay, that were life which truly liveth not,
Life lower than our life, and not above.
Thou, thou art near to God in thy fair lot;
Nearer to God is fuller of God's love—
Fuller of Him who looks on us to bless,
Who is impassible, not compassionless.

God's life is to have mercy and forgive;
One spirit with Him, thou, my Girard art;
Wherefore thro' that great life which thou dost live
There is unsuffering sympathy in thy heart.
Thou carest, though no care can pass thy gate,
And passioning not art still compassionate.

WRITTEN IN A VOLUME OF SERMONS

As a child in some far and quiet place
By earth scarce stirr'd
Grows shy as is some forest bird,
And almost feareth every stranger's face;

But when he leaves that narrow strip of strand
A world to explore,
He findeth friends on the far shore,
And boldly graspeth many a brother's hand;

So may I deem thy fair adventures fall—
So hast thou found,
O Man of God! now seeing crown'd
Many thou never thoughtest to see at all;

Hands that thou never didst expect would fold
The fadeless palm,
And faces most divinely calm
Thou never thoughtest Paradise could hold.

Forgive, if in this book I see thee what
Thou art not now,
With something of a narrow brow,
And something of a heart that hopeth not.

Sure at thy rigid creed confess'd erewhile,
With lovelit eye
Thou sighest, if the blessèd sigh,
Thou smilest if the blessèd pitying smile.

Thou smilest at the weight of glory given
To countless kings,
And puttest away thy childish things,
Taught by the manly love which is of heaven.

That hard belief whilst thou wert here below—
Belief thick-thorn'd—
With some fair flowers was adorn'd
Like furze that flames its gold in frost and snow.

And as when finest fancies troop across
The painter's soul,
He draws the outline first in coal
Before he lets his haunted pencil toss

Its wealth of colour—ev'n so dark the sketch
Thy heart hath drawn,
But now it wears the rose-red dawn
Or gold of eve's immeasurable stretch.

I hope that heav'n may hold some trembling souls
From this cold world,
Like poor birds by the snow-wind hurl'd
In where some stormy great church organ rolls.

Although they know not whether by wild seas
—Opening dim eyes,
And all apant with the surprise—
They move, or through the roaring forest trees.

Until the mild and stately quiet tell
That peace is there,
And on some carven cornice fair
A small voice sweetly pipeth, 'It is well.'

BOAZ ASLEEP

(TRANSLATED FROM VICTOR HUGO)

At work within his barn since very early,
Fairly tired out with toiling all the day,
Upon the small bed where he always lay
Boaz was sleeping by his sacks of barley.

Barley and wheat-fields he possess'd, and well,
Though rich, loved justice; wherefore all the flood
That turn'd his mill-wheels was unstain'd with mud,
And in his smithy blazed no fire of hell.

His beard was silver, as in April all
A stream may be. He did not grudge a stook:
When the poor gleaner pass'd, with kindly look,
Quoth he, 'Of purpose let some handfuls fall.'

He walk'd his way of life straight on, and plain,
With justice cloth'd, like linen white and clean;
And ever rustling toward the poor, I ween,
Like public fountains ran his sacks of grain.

Good master, faithful friend, in his estate
Frugal, yet generous beyond the youth,
He won regard of woman; for, in sooth,
The young man may be fair, the old man's great.

Life's primal source, unchangeable and bright,
The old man entereth, the day eterne;
For in the young man's eye a flame may burn,
But in the old man's eye one seeth light.

As Jacob slept, or Judith, so full deep
Slept Boaz 'neath the leaves. Now it betided,
Heaven's gate being partly open, that there glided
A fair dream forth, and hover'd o'er his sleep.

And in his dream, to heav'n, the blue and broad,
Right from his loins an oak-tree grew amain;
His race ran up it far in a long chain.
Below it sang a king, above it died a God.

Whereupon Boaz murmured in his heart:
'The number of my years is past fourscore.
How may this be? I have not any more,
Or son, or wife; yea, she who had her part

'In this my couch, O Lord! is now in Thine.
And she half-living, I half-dead within,
Our beings still commingle, and are twin.
It cannot be that I should found a line.

'Youth hath triumphal mornings; its days bound
From night as from a victory. But such
A trembling as the birch-trees to the touch
Of winter is on eld, and evening closes round.

'I bow my soul to death, as kine to meet
The water bow their fronts athirst,' he said.
The cedar feeleth not the rose's head,
Nor he the woman's presence at his feet.

For while he slept, the Moabitess Ruth
Lay at his feet expectant of his waking.
He knowing not what sweet guile she was making,
She knowing not what God would have in sooth.

Asphodel scents did Gilgal's breezes bring—
Through nuptial shadows, questionless, full fast
The angels sped, for momently there pass'd
A something blue which seemed to be a wing.

Silent was all in Jezreel and Ur;
The stars were glittering in the heav'ns' dusk meadows;
Far west, among those flow'rs of the shadows,
The thin clear crescent, lustrous over her,

Made Ruth raise question, looking through the bars
Of heaven with eyes half-oped, what god, what comer
Unto the harvest of the eternal summer
Had flung his golden hook down on the field of stars.

WILLIAM DERRY.
C. F. ALEXANDER.

THE PREACHER'S MEDITATION

I

Lord of all these thousand spirits,
spirits differing more than faces do;
Knowing all these thousand spirits,
with their thousand histories, through and through;
Knowing all these thousand histories
as their own hearts know not—never knew;—

II

Save me from the mean ambition
vulgar praise of eloquence to win—
From falsetto and self-conscious
pathos—from declamatory din—
From the tricky pulpit business,
and the silky talking that is sin.

III

Grant me honestly and strongly,
as the strong and honest only can,
To uprear my temple. Ever
when a great cathedral stands for man,
Still, severe, serene, and simple,
depth of thought and science drew the plan.

IV

Save me from false intermixture,
faithless patronising of Thy grace;
From the too resplendent colours
that the tender tints of truth efface;
From the insolent scorn unholy
of Thy glorious holy commonplace.

V

Never yet hath earthly chemist
secret of creating gem-stars found;
Still the difficult tint mysterious
lies uncaught—for God takes half the round
Of the ages for creating
the small deathless light call'd diamond.

VI

Never yet hath earthborn message,
chemistry, or stroke of chisel faint,
Lit and glorified our nature,
made the gem without a flaw or taint:
All God's working, and His only,
makes that diamond divine—a saint.

VII

Never bright point but the gospel's
won all colours hidden in heart deeps,
Show'd in perfected reflection
all that nobly flashes, sweetly weeps.
—So they say the sea-tinct sapphire
somewhere in the blood-blush'd ruby sleeps.

VIII

Wherefore not at all I ask Thee
for the sharp-cut facets of bright wit—
Not for arrows of the archer
cunning that the inner circle hit—
Not for colour'd fountains rising
by fantastic lamps and glasses lit.

IX

If Thy Spirit's sword-hilt glitter
sometimes, as its blade divine I wheel,
Golden thought or gemlike fancy
is not God's own sharpness. Soldier leal
Thinks not of the gold and jewell'd
hilt, but of the keenness of the steel.

X

Grant me, Lord, in all my studies,
through all volumes roaming where I list,
Whatsoever spacious distance
rise in ample grandeur through thought's mist,
Whatsoever land I find me,
that of right divine to claim for Christ.

XI

Do men dare to call Thy Scripture—
mystic forest, unillumined nook?
If it be so, O my spirit!
then let Christ arise on thee, and look!
With the long lane of His sunlight
shall be cut the forest of His Book.

XII

And at times give me the trembling
inevitable words that none forget.
Give the living golden moment
when a thousand eyes are lit and wet,
And some pathos makes the silence
palpitate, and grow more silent yet.

XIII

And a thousand hearts together
are as one love-fused and reconciled.
And a thousand passionate natures
harden'd by the world and sin-defiled,
Look upon me for a moment
with the soft eyes of a little child.

XIV

Give me words like the unveiling
lightning that the sky a moment rips—
Words that show the world eternal
over where this world's horizon dips—
Words of more than magic music,
with the name of Jesus on the lips.

XV

Give me words of Thine to utter
that shall open the lock'd heart like keys,—
Words that, like Thine own sweet teaching,
shall be medicínal for disease,—
Words like a revolving lanthorn
for the ships in darkness—give me these.

XVI

In the Sunday summer evening
two lights are there, in the church, unlike.
One the cool sweet dying sunshine;
one the gas-jets' fierce light-beaded spike.
With the first my speech be gifted—
light to touch and tremble, not to strike.

XVII

So for all these thousand spirits,
differing more than any faces do,
Christ through me may have some message
that shall be at once both old and new,
And my sinful human brethren
through my sinful lips learn something true.

Oxford Poems

ODE

ADDRESSED TO THE EARL OF DERBY AND RECITED IN THE SHELDONIAN THEATRE, OXFORD, AT HIS INSTALLATION AS CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY, JUNE 1, 1853

I HAD been thinking of the antique masque
  Before high peers and peeresses at Court,
Of the strong gracefulness of Milton's task,
  'Rare Ben's' gigantic sport—

Those delicate creations, full of strange
  And perilous stuff, wherein the silver flood
And crownèd city suffer'd human change
  Like things of flesh and blood.

And I was longing for a hand like those
  Somewhere in bower of learning's fine retreat,
That it might fling immortally one rose
  At Stanley's honour'd feet.

Fair as that woman whom the Prophet old
In Ardath[1] met, lamenting for her dead,
With sackcloth cast above the tiar of gold,
And ashes on her head.

Methought I met a lady yester-even;
A passionless grief, that had nor tear nor wail,
Sat on her pure proud face, that gleam'd to Heav'n,
White as a moonlit sail.

She spake. 'On this pale brow are looks of youth,
Yet angels, listening on the argent floor,
Know that these lips have been proclaiming truth
Nine hundred years and more.

'And Isis knows what time-grey towers rear'd up,
Gardens and groves and cloister'd halls are mine,
Where quaff my sons from many a myrrhine cup
Draughts of ambrosial wine.

[1] 2 Esdras ix. 38.

'He knows how night by night my lamps are lit,
How day by day my bells are ringing clear,
Mother of ancient lore, and Attic wit,
And discipline severe.

'It may be long ago my dizzied brain
Enchanted swam beneath Rome's wondrous spell,
Till like light tinctured by the painted pane
Thought in *her* colours fell.

'Yet when the great old tongue with strong effect
Woke from its sepulchre across the sea,
The subtler spell of Grecian intellect
Work'd mightily in me.

'Time pass'd—my groves were full of warlike stirs;
The student's heart was with the merry spears,
Or keeping measure to the clanking spurs
Of Rupert's Cavaliers.

'All those long ages, like a holy mother,
I rear'd my children to a lore sublime,
Picking up fairer shells than any other
Along the shores of Time.

'And must I speak at last of sensual sleep,
The dull forgetfulness of aimless years?
Oh, let me turn away my head, and weep
Than Rachel's bitterer tears—

'Tears for the passionate hearts I might have won,
Tears for the age with which I might have striven,
Tears for a hundred years of work undone,
Crying like blood to Heaven.

'I have repented—and my glorious name
Stands scutcheon'd round with blazonry more bright.
The wither'd rod, the emblem of my shame,
Bloom'd blossoms in a night.

'And I have led my children on steep mountains,
By fine attraction of my spirit brought
Up to the dark inexplicable fountains
That are the springs of thought,—

'Led them, where on the old poetic shore
The flowers that change not with the changing moon
Breathe round young hearts, as breathes the sycamore
About the bees in June.

'And I will bear them, as on eagle wings,
To leave them bow'd before the sapphire throne,
High o'er the haunts where dying pleasure sings
With sweet and swanlike tone.

'And I will lead the age's great expansions,
Progressive circles toward thought's Sabbath rest,
And point beyond them to the many mansions
Where Christ is with the blest.

'Am I not pledged who gave my bridal ring
To that old man heroic, strong, and true,
Whose grey-hair'd virtue was a nobler thing
Than even Waterloo?

'Surely that spousal morn my chosen ones
Felt their hearts moving to mysterious calls,
And the old pictures of my sainted sons
Look'd brighter from the walls.

'He sleeps at last—no wind's tempestuous breath
Play'd a dead march upon the moaning billow,
What time God's angel visited with death
The old Field Marshal's pillow.

'There was no omen of a great disaster
Where castled Walmer stands beside the shore;
The evening clouds, like pillar'd alabaster,
Hung huge and silent o'er.

'The moon in brightness walk'd the fleecy rack,
Walk'd up and down among the starry fires;
Heaven's great cathedral was not hung with black
Up to its topmost spires.

'But mine own Isis kept a solemn chiming,
A silver requiescat all night long,
And mine old trees with all their leaves were timing
The sorrow of the song.

'And through mine angel-haunted aisles of beauty,
From the grand organs gush'd a music dim,
Lauds for a champion who had done his duty,
I knew they were for *him*!

'But night is fading—I must deck my hair
For the high pageant of the gladsome morn;
I would not meet my chosen Stanley there
In sorrow, or in scorn.

'I know him nobler than his noble blood,
Seeking for wisdom as the earth's best pearl,
And bring my brightest jewelry to stud
The baldrick of mine Earl.

'I, and my children, with our fairest gift,
With song will meet him, and with music's swell:
The coronal a king might love to lift,
It will beseem him well.

'And when the influx of the perilous fight
Shall be around us as a troubled sea,
He will remember, like a red-cross knight,
God, and this day, and me.'

THE WATERS OF BABYLON[1]

'C'est là le mystère après lequel soupirent toutes les âmes exilées, qui s'affligent sur les fleuves de Babylon en se souvenant de Sion.'

BOSSUET.

A DREAM of many waters. I beheld,
And lo! a summer night in Babylon,
And the great river, even Euphrates, wash'd
The land of Shinar, somewhat swifter now,
When snows were melting on the Armenian hills.
So by the hundred gates, lintel and post
All polish'd brass, the waves went washing on.
And on the flood the osier barges rode,
Shield-shaped, with earthen jars of palm-tree wine
Heap'd on the deck, and dark shapes stretch'd around.

[1] Oxford University Prize Poem on a Sacred Subject, 1857-1860.

League upon league, through tracts of wheat
and corn,
That look'd on boundless plains, like knightly
hosts,
Far glimmering with pale and ghostly gold;
Through ranks of cedar, planted by the Lord,
Round the lign-aloes by the river-side,
Had they dropp'd down the flood. Now the
tilth ceased,
And banks, like mountains, rose on either hand,
Worthy of wonderment, the work of kings;
And long canals stretch'd, lighted by the moon
And by the company of Chaldean stars;
Till there came houses, bastion'd fortresses,
With lion gonfalons, and a maze of streets.
I saw the terraced pyramid of Bel;
And a vast palace with its gardens hung
As by art-magic in the spicèd air,
Pencill'd like purple islands fast asleep.
But evermore—by all the gates of brass,
And where the barges floated down the stream,
And far along the sloping line of streets
Hung with a thousand cressets naphtha-lit,
And up among the garden terraces—
I heard the murmur of Euphrates' flood.

Whenas I linger'd there, anon methought
The tide of life in that great city pent
Parted in twain and took its separate way.
For one moved upward by the basalt wall:
A host of fierce-eyed men with long black hair
Stream'd o'er white tunics, their dark faces wreath'd
With turbans white, in every hand a staff
Carven with lilies or with eagle head.
And haughty girls in gilded cars swept on
To the Assyrian Aphrodites' fane,
With faces passion-flush'd or terror-pale,—
Red and white roses rich, but soon to fade.
High on the palace terraces above,
There walk'd a king [1]—it made me fear to see
How like he was to those old sculptured kings,
Black-curl'd, black-bearded, full of state and woe,
Who sit the world out on their chairs of stone,
Staring for ever on the arrow-heads,
Wherein their bloody chronicles are writ.
There, too, I saw grey-beard astrologers,
Who read the silver horologue of heaven;
And them who shape the purpose shadow'd forth
In visions of the head upon the bed;

[1] Dan. iv. 29.

And priests who give attendance at the shrine
Well strewn, that hath no image of its God,
Or at that other where he sits eterne,
Statue, and throne, and pedestal of gold,
Grinning and glimmering thro' the frank-
incense.

From all these diverse went another way
Another concourse gentler of regard.
And as a widow, when her son is dead,
Putteth her white lip down to the white
shroud,
And communeth a little while with death,
So did the exiles commune with their past.
Psalms did they murmur—poesy of him,
Shepherd, king, saint, and penitent, who wore
The golden grief that gave the golden song,—
And later lamentations. For as when
A wandering man, beside an ocean shore
Belated, hears the waves upon the beach
Discoursing drearily, and night hangs black
On the black rocks, over the moaning sea—
But suddenly there circles in the gloom
A bird's voice wailing, like a soul in pain,
Not dispossess'd of some immortal hope:

So Jeremiah wailed o'er Judah's path,
Still round and round that strange old alphabet
Weaving his long funereal chant of woe,
Still singing sweetly of the seventy years!

I saw the exiles seek the river-side,
There where the willows grey grew in the midst
Of Babylon, and hang their harps thereon.

Thus evermore in ear of either throng
Sounded the voice of waters. It went up
Over the city, where the forests hang,
Sleepily parleying in the charmèd light
Round alabaster stairs and curious flowers
From Media brought, and sunny steeps of Ind.
How different to each!—To these it swept
On with a din of Oriental war.
It sounded an alarm that wakened up
Far echoes from far rivers all night long,
Angering the dragon in his lotos-bed,
And bringing Persian kings unto the brink
Of the Choaspes with their silver jars.
Like a soothsayer it denounced a woe
On Tigris, telling the predestined time
When he should wail along a waste of bricks
Painted with pine-cones and colossal bulls.

And like a divination it aroused
As it were gods ascending from the earth,
Disquieting old kings to bring them up,
Urukh and Ilgi, Iva, and the rest,
Whose politic alliances, fierce wars,
And love and hate have perished like themselves,
Forgotten in the city where they dwelt.

But to the other throng the river told
Things written in their great old Hebrew book.
It told how it had swept through Eden once,
A bright chord of the fourfold river-lyre.
And it had old-world songs of Abraham,
And him of Rehoboth who went to rule
Among the dark-eyed dukes on Seir's red rocks,[1]
And him of Pethor,[2] walking wrapped in thought.
Anon it seem'd to sing: 'My waves flow past
A dungeon, and one bound with chains of brass,
A king, a crownless, childless, eyeless ghost![3]

[1] Gen. xxxvi. 19, 31, 37. [2] Num. xxii. 5.
[3] Zedekiah—2 Kings xxv. 7.

And on my surface lights and shadows play,
And moonlights quiver on the ripply lines,
The silver roll among my sighing reeds,
And the stars look into my silent depths,
But on the awful river of his thoughts,
Black as the waters of a mountain lake
What time the hills are powder'd white with
snow,
Sunlight, and moon, and stars, are not at all:
Dark, dark, all draped with shadows of his life.'

There came another tale—a legend wild—
How the Ten Tribes, the banish'd of the Lord,
Took counsel with themselves, that they would
leave
The multitude of heathen, and fare forth
To a far country where there never came
Oarsman or sail. A penitential host,
They enter'd the Euphrates by the ford.
And often hath the moon at midnight hung
Pillars of luminous silver o'er the wave,
But not a pillar half so broad and bright
As that which steered them on while the Most
High

Held still the flood. And aye their way they took
Twice nine long months, until they reach'd the land
Arsareth.[1] There the mountains gird them in;
And o'er the gleaming granite pass white clouds,
That sail from awful waterfalls, and catch
And tear their silver fleeces on the pines.
And never hunter scaled those granite peaks,
And never wandering man hath heard the roar
Of cataracts soften'd through those folds of fir,
But a great temple hangs upon the hills.
And ever and anon rolls through its gates
A mighty music, washing through the pines,
And silver trumps still snarl at the new moon;
And all their life is sacrament, and psalm,
Vesper, or festival, and holy deed.
There do they dwell until the latter time,
When God Most High shall stay the springs again.

[1] See legend of the journey of the Ten Tribes across Euphrates to Arsareth in 2 Esdras.

The waters changed their meaning. There came down
Some of the others to Euphrates' brink,
And much they question'd why those harps hung there.
Saying, 'Come, sing us one of Sion's songs!'
How shall they sing God's song in the strange land?
For it is native of the Temple, laid
Like a white flower on Moriah's breast;
And it is not for Asia's sealike plain,
But for the shadows of the purple hills;
Not for the broad and even-pulsing stream,
But for the land where Jordan passioneth
His poetry of waterfalls night and day,
Anger'd by cataracts, lull'd by nightingales,
Crown'd with white foam, and triumphing for ever,
That is to the Euphrates, as a saint
Full of sweet yearnings and of tears divine
Is to some cold and passionless idol god,
Imprison'd in its rigid marble lines.

Next, as from a far country, there came one.[1]
Slow was his gait, his garment travel-stain'd,
And in his hand methought he held a scroll,
Written from right to left Semitic-wise.
And one said to him, 'Wherefore art thou come?'
And he, 'I come from him of Anathoth.'
Whereat he bound a stone upon the scroll,
And flung it far away into the flood;
When suddenly a trumpet-blast wax'd loud
Against Chaldea, rousing Ararat,
And Ashkenaz and Minni, kingdoms old.
Yea, instantaneously a mighty voice
Of Heaven, and earth, and all that is therein,
Sang over Babylon. And as far north
The ice-bound mariner looks up, and lo!
The sky is spann'd with the auroral arch,
And the Heav'n, full of glory, blossometh
With light unspeakable: so now, methought,
The sky grew radiant up above my head,
World upon world. Triumphantly I heard
Angels, archangels, and the company
Of Heav'n chanting unto golden harps

[1] Seriah—Jer. li. 59.

With exultation—'Babylon the great
Is fallen, fallen'—and from earth below
Rose echo, 'Fallen, fallen,' back again.
Whereon I thought that I could hear far off
The cedars and the firs of Lebanon,[1]
With a wind rustling all their odorous robes,
That shaped itself in long low syllables,
As if a happy thought went sighing through
Their dark green halls and sombre colonnades,
Saying, 'No feller comes against us now,
Since they have laid thee low, O Babylon!'
And the great river sobb'd, 'O Babylon!'
I beheld gods, and demigods, and kings,
Mere shadows upon unsubstantial thrones.
I saw the crowns upon their wither'd brows,
Like the thin circlet of the waning moon
Ring'd by a thin white cloud. Ranged were they all,
A royal consistory, row on row,
Sleeping their sleep. But now their ranks were stirred,
Like wan leaves, shrunken, scarcely substantive,
The chestnuts' ashes, or the beeches' fire—

[1] Isaiah xiv.

Up-stirr'd in heaps, and a shrill murmuring went
Among them, like the wailing of the birds.
And they look'd narrowly on one that came
Into their company, and laugh'd, and said,
'How art thou fallen, O thou Morning star!
For we are kings at least, and take our fill
Of rest, each one in glory on his bed,
Strewn with sweet odours, divers kinds of spice.
But thou art as a wanderer in our land,
Thy carcase trodden under foot of men—
Disrobed, dissceptred, dropp'd with blood, discrown'd!'
Thereat Heav'n and the abyss were mute once more,
And the curse fell upon broad walls, high gates,
Utterly broken, burnèd in the fire:
And the curse fell on garden-terraces,
Faded, all faded, like a golden cloud,
Or tumbled like a cliff in heaps of stones;
And the curse fell upon Euphrates last,
Fountain and flood and all his sea dried up.

Yet other shapes and sounds came to me still.
I saw a fire dark-red in the fierce sky,
Three shadowy figures flitting to and fro;
Far off I heard their *Benedicite.*[1]
I saw a host, across the river's bed,
Marching right onward to a palace-gate,
Whence from a great feast fled a thousand lords,
And dark sultanas dress'd in white symars.
And in the hall I saw a blaze of light
Round gold and silver cups of strange device,
And one mysterious figure, scarlet-robed,[2]
Waiting unmoved, and on the daïs high
A king, the wine still red on his white lips.
And I beheld a barge upon the wave;
Lo! at its helm there was a godlike form,[3]
A glittering tiar above his kausia.
Sitting the centre of a light of gems,
Shadow'd by silk-embroider'd sails, he steered
His pinnace to the dyke Pallakopas,
Keeping his royal court and state on deck,

[1] The Song of the Three Children.
[2] Dan. v. 29.
[3] Alexander the Great. See Grote, *History*, vol. xii.

As his yacht bore him to see the pictured graves
Of the old kings, that sleep world without end,
Where shadows are the only moving things.
And one kept court upon the deck as well,
A skeleton grim and stern, and that was Death.
And next a stately chamber, muffled round
With golden curtains, rose beside the stream:
And, his face cover'd with a silken veil,
Walked the Resch-Glutha[1] among agèd men,
Thin faces, pinch'd-up foreheads, narrow hearts,
Whereon the thoughts of God's eternal book
Are stamp'd in petty legendary lore,
As the great waves with all their noble beat
Carve out thin feather'd lines along the strand.
And last I thought Euphrates was dried up,
And o'er his bed the kings of the Orient,
Saying with war's full stream of clanging gold,[2]
March'd to the battle of Almighty God.

[1] The 'Chief of the Captivity' among the Babylonian Jews. The emara, Mischna, and Talmud grew up in Babylon.

[2] Πολλῷ ῥευμάτι—χρυσοῦ καναχῆς. (Soph., 'Antig.,' 130.)

Once more before me swept the moonlit
stream
That had entranced me with its memories—
A thousand battles, and one burst of psalms,
Rolling his waters to the Indian Sea
Beyond Balsara and Elana far,
Nigh to two thousand miles from Ararat.
And his full music took a finer tone,
And sang me something of a 'gentler stream'[1]
That rolls for ever to another shore
Whereof our God Himself is the sole sea,
And Christ's dear love the pulsing of the tide,
And His sweet Spirit is the breathing wind.
Something it chanted, too, of exiled men
On the sad bank of that strange river Life,
Hanging the harp of their deep heart desires
To rest upon the willow of the Cross,
And longing for the everlasting hills,
Mount Sion, and Jerusalem of God.
And then I thought I knelt, and kneeling heard
Nothing—save only the long wash of waves,
And one sweet psalm that sobbed for ever-
more.

[1] 'A gentler stream with gladness still
The city of our God shall fill.'—(Psalm xlvi. 4.)

TO ROBERT JOCELYN ALEXANDER

Suspected all my life of poetry,
Late have I come to make confession here—
Late, late indeed, in autumn of my year,
I gather up my sheaves that scatter'd lie,
Some faint far light of immortality
Falling upon my harvest—the severe
Reproachful winds whistling into mine ear,
'Come, gather up thy sheaves before thou die.'
Sheaves! at that word of valleys thick with corn
I think, and how along their golden line
To Joseph's ev'n his sire's obeisance did!
But thee thy three triumphal years adorn,
Three sheaves of prose and verse—and on my lid
A proud tear trembles for a son like mine.

ISHMAEL

An angel's voice—and lo! on Hagar's ears,
Sitting in Zophar by the well forlorn,
Four words—the future of a life unborn;
Four words—the story of four thousand years!

Here in this West, the land of onward wills,
Our restless history moves, and all things change;
But there they stand unmoved, as is the range
And steadfast front of the eternal hills.

And as the man for ever, so the race,
Wearing about it through the changeless years
The selfsame laughters and the selfsame tears,
The selfsame lights and shadows on the face!

[1] This poem, by my son, was awarded the prize for the best Poem on a Sacred Subject in the University of Oxford, 1875-1878.

So Ishmael yet can rein his battle steeds
  Over the burning stretches vast and wide,
  The country from the Red Sea's western side
To where Euphrates moans among his reeds;

Then back and back, o'er miles of desert sand,
  Till over-wearied horse and rider rest
  Beneath some Pyramid, whose lofty crest
Welcomes them nobly to their mother-land.

Shall there be music for them? any cry?
  Yes! Memnon, rousing when the dawn is near,
  Shall wake a strain so desolate and drear,
It suits the wanderer's children riding by.

A race not wholly cursed, not wholly blest,
  Countless as sands—into the desert vast
  Plump after plump of spears before me past,
Seeking, it seem'd in vain, for any rest.

I thought the centuries were rolling back,
  And those wild horsemen as they rode apace
  Might meet the wandering father of their race,
And comfort Hagar on her lonely track;

And they might come ere the quick evening
fell—
Future and past together strangely met,—
And find the mother, and with lips still wet
The boy reviving by that charmèd well.

Round them a space of yellow sand unroll'd
Lies weltering in the evening's purple light—
His heritage and theirs—before the night
Sweeps the red sunlight from that cloth of gold.

Vain fancy; for no thought the poet weaves,
Clothing his figures with a mortal toil,
Can add aught nobler—nay, would rather
spoil
The simple truth on God's immortal leaves,

Which, undestroy'd, lives on divinely yet.
For whensoe'er an Ishmael is born,
Then are the lips of Hagar wreath'd in scorn,
And Sarah's bitter heart can not forget.

Its streams shall fail not, for in every clime
Hagars and Ishmaels of years to be,
Lifting up sudden eyes of hope, shall see
The fountain love amid the sands of time;

And God be with them, coming as He came—
Not Isaac's only, but the Lord of all;
Softly on overburden'd hearts shall fall
The music of His universal Name.[1]

Short glimpse of heaven, and brief respite from pain;
For all the future, with its heavy cost
Of progress unattain'd, and blessings lost,
Of tears and triumphs, calls us back again.

Thou shalt not set thy city on a hill,
There to hold festival, and royal state,
Girdled with walls, and buckled with a gate,
And fondly thinking to abide there still,—

Like some grey king, upon his head a crown,
Dreaming in some grey castle, unaware
Of Time's fell feet upon the marble stair,
Stealing right on to shake his greatness down.

Thou, too, art but a mortal! yet thy roof
Is builded up of air, and lit with stars;
Thy pillars are the fluted sunrise bars,
Thy walls of rock are time and tempest-proof.

[1] 'Elohim' (Gen. xxi. 17). See Bishop Wordsworth's note.

There thou shalt dwell, in more than kingly
power,
Beneath some palm; and when the hills
show brown
At even, with the shadows bowing down,
Shalt bow and worship in that holy hour.

Oh, the poor mother that was never wife!
The twice-pathetic anguish of the slave;
Turning away from that she could not save,
Fainting so fast beside the streams of life.[1]

Yet her wild son some earthly blessing wins—
Children, the earnest of a countless race,
With sunrise on the dying archer's face,
Fallen amid his twelve stout Paladins:[2]

And reconciliation, it may be,
When to the silence of Machpelah's cave,
Owning the greatness of the truce death gave,
Isaac and Ishmael came heavily

[1] Genesis xvi. 14. [2] Genesis xxv. 16.

To lay their father in his rocky bed.[1]
How should they not put all contention by!
He found it such a gentle thing to die—
And there is peace amid the mighty dead.

There let them linger for a little while—
Those brothers sunder'd long and far away,—
Merging in sacred tears, what space they may,
The heavenly laughter and the mocking smile.

So that old story—mingled joy and strife,
Divine and human—through a mist of tears
Speaks to men's hearts across a sea of years,
True as the imperfections of our life.

Bards thou shalt have, importunate to sing
Of gorgeous love, and how the fights were fought;
Bright songs, with no deep undertone of thought—
Rich jewels sparkling round a meaner thing.

[1] 'His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah' (Genesis xxv. 9).

Ah! how unlike the melody *he* found,
  The shepherd, when his waves of music broke
  Upon the ringing shores of souls, and woke
A twofold poetry of thought,[1] and sound!

Thy minstrels shall pass out into the dark,
  The flowers of language change 'neath other
    skies—
  On alien tongues their delicacy dies—
God only stamps a universal mark.

No son of thine, a flush upon his brow,
  Shall sink with many sunsets to the West;
  No travell'd breezes give him far-off rest,
No virgin waters sing around his prow.

Lay we such triumph by, 'tis none of thine!
  Thou drinkest not from any peaceful cup;
  When the wild tribes are out, and standards
    up,
Of blood—blood red, the colour of thy wine:

[1] Alluding to the parallelism of Hebrew poetry.

From distant mountains, from the lone hill ledge,
The Arabs sweep to battle thro' the night,
Their snowy caftans—a fell line of white—
Showing along the swarthy battle edge;

As on that impious day when, neck to neck
In one array 'gainst Israel, were seen
The sons of Moab, with the Hagarene;
Gebal was there, Ammon, and Amalek.[1]

And still the picture darkens, till we see
Only that wondrous contrast, which the pen
Of Paul has set before the eyes of men,—
The offspring of the bondmaid, and the free.[2]

Not thine, O Ishmael, the gain and loss,
The gloom and gleam of type o'er Isaac's race,
That brighten'd on to an immortal Face,
And deepen'd to the shadow of the Cross.

[1] Psalm lxxiii. 5-7. [2] Gal. iv. 22, *sqq.*

For thee no recompense the ages hold,
No God Incarnate springing from thy line;
On earth no Virgin with a Son Divine;
In heaven no eastern star's prophetic gold.

Oh, 'wild, not free,' the slave-born's deepest brand,
Imprison'd in a changeless mould of mind,
With passions shifting like the shifting wind,
And hand still lifted 'gainst the lifted hand.

If less the height of grace, then less the fall,
Less gifted, having wander'd less away.
Thou hast no brightest and no darkest day,
No Bethlehem, no Pilate's judgment-hall.

If, for thy fault, the outcast Hagar trod
Lone paths of grief, how is it not the worst,
The drearest fate, and more than twice accurst
To be the Hagar of the Church of God!

Still Isaac wanders over land and sea,
Stopping betimes with men a little while;
There is unfathom'd sadness in his smile,
As one who looks for what has been to be.

Still, in that thirsty land where it befell
  That one for mortal streams who thirsted sore,
  But needing the immortal waters more,
Found, Hagar-like, her Lord beside the well;

Oh, still by Sion, and where Jordan runs,
  Over against his waterfalls dark gray
  The Arabs pitch their nomad tents to-day
Upon the land that knoweth not her sons.

But not for ever—it shall yet be well;
  And when this tyranny is overpast,
  Deep respite from unquiet find at last
Alike God's Isaac and His Ishmael.

Enough of fret and fever—he is gone;
  Long ages since he yielded up his breath;
  Why should he live so sadly after death?
Leave him to sleep, and let the world pass on.

Seek not to raise again the broken psalm,
  So strangely utter'd to the desert sky;
  After quick throbbing, it is sweet to die,
And take a deep exchange of awful calm.

Freely, as one not having aught to hide,
  Before his brethren's faces to the last,
  Softly and gallantly the wild soul pass'd;
Homelike and hero-like the death he died.[1]

So rest in death's dark tent beyond thy wars,
  Where noise of battle doth for ever cease,
  Nor earthly weeping break upon thy peace,
Under the brimm'd eyes of the Eastern stars.

Dear is the boon that much oblivion gave;
  Not monumental marble for the head,
  But kindly gloom around the quiet dead,—
The requiescat of an unknown grave.

And I, upon the wings of thought would bear
  Thy body from the noise of busy men,
  Into the heart of some untrodden glen,
Far off amid the lustrous mountain air;

[1] Genesis xxv. 18.

There to be buried when the night shall fall,
In Sinai, a bowshot from the crest,
Caught like a child, into its mother's breast—
The bosom of the Hagar of St. Paul.[1]

ROBERT JOCELYN ALEXANDER.

[1] 'For this Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia.' Reiche seems to prove that St. Paul here states (Gal. iv. 24) that locally, in Arabia, Mount Sinai was known by a name equivalent in meaning to Hagar. (Cf. Reiche, *Comment. Crit., in locum.*)

Recently Written

A MISSIONARY'S MEDITATION

The Century dies in tears,
The Century dies in fears—
In tears! Our best-beloved are at the front;
On Natal's hills of storm
Heroic blood is warm,
And white lips breathe at home, '*Beati mortui sunt.*'

In fears! There are who trace
Some far world's fateful race
Down to a moment on our death-doomed shores;
Watching that awful tryst
Their thoughts turn atheist,
And hear no Father's steps adown Time's corridors.[1]

[1] This stanza refers to the widespread panic occasioned by Professor Falb's calculations about the destruction of the earth on November 13, 1899.

When a new age again
Dawns on the sons of men,
Earth shall have ampler crowns for Christ to wear;
In many another tongue
Anthems to Him be sung,
A more exceeding weight of glory load heaven's stair.

When first our earth did see
Him on the bitter Tree,
The olden languages bore witness well—
The Roman speech of force,
The subtle Greek's discourse,
The Hebrew's rhythm of thought and mystic oracle.

But ere in His own time
He comes again sublime
All in their proper tongue towards Him shall reach—
Some that are infantine,
And others half divine
With perfect cadences, the glory of all speech.

Lord! grant me grace to bend
Until my years I end
Over the poorest tongues beneath the suns;
Such clay may yet supply
Gems for some liturgy,
And God's thoughts clothe themselves from lowly lexicons.

Grant me no hasty spasm,
But strong enthusiasm,
Sweet passion to win souls and make them free—
I ask not pomp at all
Of power rhetorical,
But let my manifold being be lull'd to rest by Thee;

As when a full harp swept
By a master's hand hath kept
A stormy music rushing through the hall,
Sudden he lays his palm
On the strings making calm,
A hush as if he held a harp marmoreal.

Lord! lead my footsteps still
Wherever is Thy will,
Wherever our strong English Colonist grieves;
Hearing no sweet church-bell,
By snow waste or hot dell,
Arums of Africa, Canadian maple-leaves.

Lord! it were over bold
For me like one of old
To ask enlistment in the martyr-host—
Although life's broken cry
Thereby wins perfectly
The one consummate voice that speaks life's purpose most.[1]

My long life-task may lie
In dust and drudgery,
But all is well if only it be Thine—
Dust of Thy sacred feet,
Drudgery not unmeet,
So dust be dust of gold and drudgery divine.

[1] See the difficult but striking passage in Ignatius, *Epist. ad Rom.* 2. His martyrdom alone would make an intelligible divine utterance (λόγος Θεοῦ), not a broken cry as of one of the lower creatures (φωνή). See Bishop Lightfoot, *in loc.*

Grant me Thy mighty grace
That all my commonplace
By Thy great leading may be render'd high,
So through low leaves of thought
Blue sky may be inwrought,
My commonplace become Thine opportunity.

They tell me that there wait
For me at death's dark gate
The icy chill, the fever's touch of fire;
They who dare say no worse
Say the Missionary's curse
Is to die young and poor, nor go in this world higher.

Ship never fail'd that stored
Before her or on board
All whereunto true Mariners resort.
Christ unto us is given,
His book, His Church, His Heaven,
Compass and chart and stars, a Pilot and a port!

IS WAR THE ONLY THING THAT HAS NO GOOD IN IT?

THEY say that 'war is hell,' the 'great accursed,'
The sin impossible to be forgiven;
Yet I can look beyond it at its worst,
And still find blue in Heaven.

And as I note how nobly natures form
Under the war's red rain, I deem it true
That He who made the earthquake and the storm
Perchance makes battles too!

The life He loves is not the life of span
Abbreviated by each passing breath,
It is the true humanity of Man
Victorious over death,

The long expectance of the upward gaze,
Sense ineradicable of things afar,
Fair hope of finding after many days
The bright and morning Star.

Methinks I see how spirits may be tried,
Transfigured into beauty on war's verge,
Like flowers, whose tremulous grace is learnt beside
The trampling of the surge.

And now, not only Englishmen at need
Have won a fiery and unequal fray,—
No infantry has ever done such deed
Since Albuera's day!

Those who live on amid our homes to dwell
Have grasped the higher lessons that endure,—
The gallant Private learns to practise well
His heroism obscure.

His heart beats high as one for whom is made
A mighty music solemnly, what time
The oratorio of the cannonade
Rolls through the hills sublime.

Yet his the dangerous posts that few can mark,
The crimson death, the dread unerring aim,
The fatal ball that whizzes through the dark,
The just-recorded name—

The faithful following of the flag all day,
The duty done that brings no nation's thanks,
The *Ama Nesciri*[1] of some grim and gray
A Kempis of the ranks.

These are the things our commonweal to guard,
The patient strength that is too proud to press,
The duty done for duty, not reward,
The lofty littleness.

And they of greater state who never turned,
Taking their path of duty high and higher,
What do we deem that they, too, may have learned
In that baptismal fire?

Not that the only end beneath the sun
Is to make every sea a trading lake,
And all our splendid English history one
Voluminous mistake.

They who marched up the bluffs last stormy week—
Some of them, ere they reached the mountain's crown,
The wind of battle breathing on their cheek
Suddenly laid them down.

[1] The heading of a remarkable chapter in the *De Imitatione Christi*.

Like sleepers—not like those whose race is run—
Fast, fast asleep amid the cannon's roar,
Them no reveille and no morning gun
Shall ever waken more.

And the boy-beauty passed from off the face
Of those who lived, and into it instead
Came proud forgetfulness of ball and race,
Sweet commune with the dead.

And thoughts beyond their thoughts the Spirit lent,
And manly tears made mist upon their eyes,
And to them came a great presentiment
Of high self-sacrifice.

Thus, as the heaven's many-coloured flames
At sunset are but dust in rich disguise,
The ascending earthquake dust of battle frames
God's pictures in the skies.

Sonnets chiefly in my Library

I

ADVICE TO SONNET-WRITERS

If thou canst mould thy work as Winter does,
Who helps, not hides, its beauty line on line,
Intricately maintaining his design
Through all the infinite intaglios
Pent on a narrow pane; if to a rose
A diamond thou canst cut—it may be thine
The sonnet's subtle secret to divine.
Chiefly if thou thy central thought dispose
So that through words by brevity made pale
They who look studiously shall see at last
Thy thought grow large—as in a misty zone
At sea through the grey gazed-on grows a mast
Obscurely carrying noble heights of sail
Miles through the dim magnificent unknown;

2

If thou hast merely art mosaicwise
To cramp just fourteen lines with rhymes just five;
If thou our Shakespeare's sonnet half despise
Because he greatly spurn'd so strict a gyve,
Because he royally allows rhymes seven,
Because that glorious couplet at the close
Flower'd like the spring, and starry like the heav'n
Seem to uphold a world in its repose;
If thou so let thy fingers count away
That all uncountable music of renown,
Those sonnets dark, yet full of fadeless day,
Little, yet living half the epics down—
Give thine own sonnets to the fire that lies
Ready for all correct stupidities.

3

A CRITIC OF POETRY

I HEARD a critic in a certain town
Lecture on Poetry. As butterflies,
Like sapphire spangles fallen from splendid skies,
On a stiff piece of cardboard are pinn'd down,
So dealt he with great verses, of renown
Them disenchanting, and their rich surprise.
He told the poets off by families,
Scarce one with beauty of his very own.
'I hold song separate from the man himself;
I hold it for a delicate verbal trick.
Dainty work here!—this is the way he does it:
He puts me up a private colour-shelf;
Drawing a flower, he steals red tints to rose it.
Poetry 's a pretty branch of rhetoric!'

4

THE CRITIC ANSWERED

Vexed by this voluble talker, I turn'd home,
Half-angry with myself for a half 'yes.'
Hush! a lark sings. Uplifted littleness,
Airy Longinus of the azure dome,
Poet so born, who didst not so become!
Thou tellest me what yon critic did not guess—
Our songs are just ourselves, not more nor less,
High just as they are high the song starts from.
Voice that voyagest over vibrant seas,
Joy well content with thine own rich enjoyment,
Traveller up from daisies to the sun,
Glorious perfection in a small employment,
Tuned triumph, wing'd, transcendently at ease,
Thou and thy ditty are entirely one.

5

SONNETS CHIEFLY SUGGESTED BY ST. AUGUSTINE

WHAT WE LOVE IN LOVING GOD

What love I when I love Thee, O my God?
Not corporal beauty, nor the limb of snow,
Nor of loved light the white and pleasant flow,
Nor manna showers, nor streams trickling abroad,
Nor flowers of Heaven, nor small stars of the sod.
Not these, my God, I love, who love Thee so.
Yet love I something better than I know :—
A certain light on a more golden road;
A sweetness, not of honey or the hive;
A scent, a music, and a blossoming,
Fair, fadeless, undiminish'd, never dim;
Eternal, timeless, placeless, without gyve,
The unknown desire of each created thing—
This, this is what I love in loving Him.

6

THIS, this is what I love, and what is this?
I ask'd the beautiful earth, who said—
'Not I.'
I ask'd the depths, and the immaculate sky
And all the spaces said—'Not He, but His.'
And so, like one who scales a precipice,
Height after height, I scaled the flaming ball
Of the great universe—yea, pass'd o'er all
The world of thought, which so much higher is.
Then I exclaimed—'To whom is mute all murmur
Of phantasy, of nature, and of art,
Who seeks not earthly sweetnesses to win,
He, than articulate language hears a firmer
And grander meaning in his own deep heart.'
O voiceless voice—'My servant, enter in!'

7

IDEAS FADING IN THE MEMORY

QUICKLY they vanish to a land unlit,
Things for which no man cares to smile or mourn,
Forgotten in the place where they were born;
Each hath a marvellous history unwrit,
A fathomless river floweth over it.
Quickly they fade, with no more traces worn
Than shadows flying over fields of corn
Wear, as in soft processional they flit.
The thought (much like the children of our youth)
Doth often die before us, and presents,
With tints much faded and with lines effaced,
The very semblance of the monuments
To which we are approaching still in sooth,
Although the brass and marble do not waste.[1]

[1] See Locke, *On the Human Understanding*, Book II. chap. I. secs. 4, 5.

8

REVIVAL OF MEMORY

SADLY, O sage, thine images are told.
Think we of cornfields, where again there fall
At Memory's touch, that is so magical,
All the long lights that ever rippled gold
Across their surface, all the manifold
Wavelets of tremulous shadow; and withal
Through doors and windows of a haunted hall
Those buried children of the days of old,
Those evanescent children of dead years,
Clouded or glorious, glide into the room,
Sudden as yellow leaves drop from the tree,
And all the moulder'd imagery reappears,
And all the letter'd lines are fair to see,
And all the legend lives above the tomb?

9

MARVELS OF MEMORY

STRANGE dying, resurrection stranger yet!
In the deep chamber, Memory, let me dwell,
Folded in a recess ineffable.
Lo! in that silent chamber sometimes set,
I music hear, and breath of violet
(Though flowers be none within a mile to smell)
From breath of lily I can finely tell,
And I with joy remember my regret,
And I, regretful, think how I was glad.
O men! who roam to see world-famous tracts,
Visits to many a lovely land ye weave
In looms of fancy—but *yourselves* ye leave,
Yourselves more marvellous than all Alps snow-clad,
All great white wonders of the cataracts.

10

SONNETS ON PRAYER

ON PRAYER

'Hold not Thy peace at my tears'

WHAT is the saddest, sweetest, lowest sound
Nearest akin to perfect silence? Not
The delicate whisper sometimes in the hot
Autumnal morning heard the cornfields round;
Nor yet to lonely man, now almost bound
By slumber, near his house a murmuring river
Buzzing and droning o'er the stones for ever.
Not such faint voice of Autumn oat-encrown'd,
And not such liquid murmur, O my heart!
But tears that drop o'er doubts as well as graves,
A sound the very weeper scarcely hears,
A music in which silence hath some part.
O! the all-gentle by all-hearing saves—
Hold not Thy peace then, Saviour, at my tears.

II

AN ETERNAL ROSE AND MOTHER

Look, if eternally a fair rose grew,
And if therefrom suns near yet not intense
Won out a purple-flamèd opulence,
Impassioning the paleness through and through
Eternally beneath the unchanging blue;
Then should that rose eternally from thence
Offer its beauty to the eyes and sense.
And if eternally some mother knew
Her gentle babe born under some ill star
Eternal—but eternally most weak—
Then should she ever wail her child of woe!
Such children, surely, are the dearest far.
For ever have her tenderest words to speak,
For ever have her purest tear to flow.

12

THE roses and the mothers cannot choose
But give forth what of beautiful they have,
But give forth what fair love and sunshine gave
In tender sympathy, or delicate hues,
Soft scents eternal, love's undying dews.
And He who bore the man's heart from earth's wave
To Heaven's calm shore that He might sweetly save,
Cannot but pity as our wail renews.
Fragrant eternally were the eternal rose,
Eternal were compassion for the child,
Eternal are our sorrows in His sight;
And everlastingly compassion flows
From Him who bears Humanity undefiled,
For infinite pathos pity infinite.

13

WHAT PRAYER IS NOT

Prayer is not eloquence nor measured tone
Nor memory musical of periods fair.
The son forlorn forgetteth half his prayer.[1]
Faith sighs its prayers, or weeps them with long moan,
Its periods have a grammar of their own.
Babes have no words, but only weep or e'er
The mother reads the little hunger there.
Faith looks its prayers. Behold, before the throne
There be full many love-looks of the saints;
And David's upward look from the earth's din
To yon long silence may be read, I think,
Legibly in Heaven's hymn-book of complaints.[2]
Ah! the best prayers that we can ever win
Can scarcely be imprison'd by our ink.[3]

[1] Luke xv. 18, 19, compared with ver. 21.
[2] Psalm v. 3.
[3] The three last sonnets were partly suggested by Samuel Rutherfurd's *Trial and Triumph of Faith.*

14

ST. JOHN AT PATMOS

WHAT be his dreams in Patmos? O'er the seas
Looks he toward Athens, where the very fall
Of Grecian sunlight is Platonical?
Or, peradventure, towards the Cyclades,
The Delian earth-star, ray'd with laurel-trees—
From ribbon'd baskets where Demeter threw
Flowers the colour of the country blue
Oat-garlanded in Paros—or where bees
Humming o'er Amalthæa, who fed Zeus
With goatmilk, goldenly the forest starr'd—
Where Dionysus, driven o'er the brine,
Triumphant as his prow went Naxosward,
Ivied the mast, and cream'd the crimson wine,
Crimson, or yellow-colour'd Grecian juice.

15

IN GALILEE

Not fancies of the soft Ionian clime,
Nor thoughts on Plato's page, that greener grow
Than do the plane-trees by the pleasant flow
Of the Ilissus in the summer time,
Came to the Galilean with sweet chime.
Blanch'd in the blaze of Syrian summers, lo!
He gazes on Gennesareth, aglow
Within its golden mountain cup sublime.
The sunset comes. Behind the Roman tower
The dark boat's circled topsails shift and swell,
Quench'd is the flickering furnace of the dust,
The mountains branded as with red gold rust,
The tunic'd boatmen dip their nets an hour
And the sun goeth down on Jezreel.

16

GROWTH OF KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST

BUT ere heaven's cressets burn along its plain,
The Master comes. And as a man, all night
Lull'd in a room full fronting ocean's might,
First waking sees a whiteness on his pane,
A little dawning whiteness, then again
A little line insufferably bright
Edging the ripples, orbing on outright
Until the glory he may scarce sustain;
And as a mighty city far-descried,
Although the same from each ascension high
Looks strangely different to the merchantmen
Who wend their way thereto by hill or glen—
So by St. John's deep meditation eyed
That Nature grew to God's own majesty.

17

LEGEND: HOW ST. JOHN'S BETROTHAL WAS BROKEN

An antique legend speaks to this effect:
'John in his youth had woo'd and won a maid,
But, of his own felicity afraid,
Fear'd to be its triumphant architect.
Wherefore from week to week did he expect
Until his Lord and Master should have said
"Thou mayest," or "mayest not." One night, wind-stay'd,
The fishers saw the o'ercast sky fire-fleck'd.
Then through the blinding spindrift of the storm
There seem'd to walk a Shape on Galilee
Whose footsteps were not wetted of the spray.
And by the boat the white mysterious form
Stood closest John, and seem'd to him to say,
Looking him through, "John! I have need of thee."'[1]

[1] *Acta Johannis* xxi. (*Act. Apost. Apoc.*, Tisch, 275).

18

THEN follow'd something more. A little space
The sea ceas'd working. Thereon dimly through
The darkness upon John's weak soul there grew
A sad, white, sorrowing, reproachful face,
With eyes that look'd through life and every place,
As if the end of all our works it knew,
Seeing through all things to the one thing true,
To the lost glory, and the fading grace.
And a voice came moaning across the Lake:
'My servant John! if thou hadst not been mine,
I would have suffer'd thee to marry her.'
And of the heart He was about to break,
Broken His own by that stern love divine,
Too sadly well He was the interpreter.

19

FALSE ETHICAL CONCEPTION OF THIS LEGEND

THANKS that the legend bids not for belief,
That the true John begins not with a high
And flagrant treason 'gainst humanity ;
That the true Christ rejoices not in grief
Which robs life's harvest of its richest sheaf,
But doth begin from Cana, where there lie
The finest wine-drops of festivity
In life's poor water—much delight, in brief,
Briefly insphered, where young hearts chasten well
The single selfishness by doubling it,
And ask another strongly to say *yes*,
Perchance within a richer home to dwell,
Perchance to share a shadowy quietness,
But always richer if by love 'tis lit.

20

ST. LUKE'S HELLENIC CHARACTER

METHOUGHT I saw one pass, son of the race
Wherein the splendid mediate we seek
Betwixt the West and Asia, a quick Greek
Hellenic, out of Antioch. I could trace
Moods ever flitting o'er his mobile face.
Pathetic was his voice, and seemed to break
With pity for the hearts of those who ache.
He look'd for beauty in some lovely place,
Perfect but unattainable. His glance
Had something piercing various natures through
Down to the deep foundations of our life,
Yet seeking in heav'n an unimagined blue;
And round about our vile and vulgar strife,
Beauty and charm, the magic and romance.

21

BEARING ON HIS GOSPEL

So when he turned Evangelist, see what came,—
Writ on his page were stories, with sweet tears
Baptized by all the yearnings of the years.
The King looks forth from beauty, not from flame;
The earth grows prouder and puts off her shame
With loftier companionship than appears
In Fauns and Dryads when the wanderer nears,
And the idyllic earth is not the same.
Still by the Grecian taught each age surveys
Things fairer than are song's creations all,
Yet in historic verity strongly set
The symphony of Bethlehem's pastoral,
The broken litanies, the men who gaze
On the ascending Form from Olivet.

22

COWLEY'S POEMS

THEE, far-off poet near the first of all,
Fain would I give the best I have to give.
Little thou hast of false or fugitive,
Though they misname thee metaphysical.
Our glorious Tennyson to rise and fall
Of thy Pindaric greatly did arrive,
Listen'd fastidiously, and bade it live,
Ancient and modern mated to enthrall.
Nor only war and state were for thy lyre.
Thou sawest on the brow of science drawn
The passionate look whereto thy peers were blind.
Thine was the genuine Idean fire,
The anticipation dark yet disciplined,
Prophetic, hailing heralds of the dawn.[1]

[1] See Cowley's odes to Hobbes and the Royal Society.

23

CRASHAW'S POEMS

Among earth's poets certain known of few
Pass into deathlessness o'er death's frontiers,
Unpraised, unprized, unlaurell'd of their peers.
Yet in time's patient light their work shows true:
The far-off generations find it new.
In happy mornings of immortal years
Immortal is the colour that it wears.
Great poets greatly borrow of its blue,
Or pass into the heights that few attain,
Humming some bars of it 'neath brows star-crown'd.
O Poet of the poets! so with thee.
With tints of thine did Pope his marble stain,
And Milton's spirit in thy music found
Majestic swell, soft fall of infinite sea.

24

SENSUOUS, some say, a very amorist
In spiritual spheres of mystic sweets—
Drowsy with incense-fumes, a feebler Keats
Who made the realm of prayer his own acquist.
Nay! let us hail thee palmer, harmonist,
Young heart of fire whose life-consuming beats
Panted it dead, longing for bless'd retreats.
They must love thee who love the love of Christ.
'Not Spanish, but heav'n,' here Theresa spake.
The mother intemerate outsnows snow.
The cross is purple with its Passion-wine;
And penitent sinners weep with such sweet woe,
That you might think the nightingales awake
In the long dusk of dark-draped aisles divine.

25

In our tongue's youth something he strongly wrought
With the intrícacies of the octave rhyme.
Sweetness was his, and awe, a manifold chime
Of church-bells, and a wealth of sacred thought.
Years fail'd him, and his purpose came to nought.
The silver measure chosen in his prime
Died with him ; and thereafter tide and time
Pass'd, and none else its difficult beauty sought.
Then Byron made it classical for sin—
Sin's wild wit and theatrical despair,
Its passionate rapture and hysteric woe.
When shall Heav'n raise a poet wise to win
That various melody for itself, and so
Make our song richer by one sacred air?[1]

[1] Crashaw's longest, but unfinished, sacred poem (the *Sospetto di Herode*) is in the 'ottava rima,' the measure employed by Byron in *Don Juan*.

26

GIBBON'S 'MEMOIRS'

He lived to learn, to watch his knowledge grow,
Nightly to question what advance precise
Twelve hours had given to that tide of ice.
If passionate, passionate only to lay low
Soul-highness, polishing his word-gems slow
As tides work pebbles smooth, until his nice
Sarcastic taste could say—'Let this suffice!'
Marvel not then that to love's creed his *no*
He hiss'd, and in the volume of his book
Suspected every lily for its whiteness,
All large heart-poetry for lack of prose.
The Alpine majesty, the ample rose,
The novelties of God he could not brook—
The love that is of love the essential Brightness.

27

WHEREFORE his picture evermore was hued
Over with colours, peradventure fine,
But mixed not for a Heav'n-conceived design.
A creed that like the sacred mountains stood
Sunlighted depth or moonlit amplitude,
Majestic, measureless, with trim tape-line
Did he attempt, and scorn'd, being undivine,
The excess divine, the tropic rain of God.
Faith's flowers must die where heart-air is so chilly;
Fair must seem false when love's so little kind,
Denying love when love is nobly new.
The virgin's fingers fold a tarnish'd lily
For those who scorn virginity. The blind
Are proof against sweet proof that Heav'n is blue.

28

Yet with what art, thro' what enormous space,
With what innumerous threads how deftly plann'd,
Silverly separate in the subtle hand,
He winds the stories to their central place!
Nothing so false as may such art disgrace;
But colours here deliberately wann'd,
There as of fabled sunsets fading grand
Upon grey gods of high pathetic face.
Faint thro' the laurel groves of Antioch
The last hymn dies, and the earth's large regret
Divinely wails thro' many a dusk-gold lawn.
Then a stern symbol rises from the rock—
The cross of Roman Syria grimly set,
Leafless, dim-lit in leaden-colour'd dawn.

29

THE HEREAFTER

[The writer's purpose cannot be fairly judged without taking into account the whole collection of these sonnets on 'The Hereafter.']

THE DEISTS ON ETERNAL PUNISHMENT[1]

FINITE offence, infinite punishment!
No other finite works out infinite.
And what is sin? Full often to the light
Of life's main sea merely a shadow lent
From a thin cloud—a momentary bent
Of wills not adamant in their own despite
Hastily touch'd; on shields of argent white
A blur avenged by deep self-discontent.
Cruel the creeds that disproportionate
To transitory sin eternal fire;
Condemn'd by love's great logic that forgives,
By all the helplessness of human lives,
By all the Fatherhood our hearts desire,
By all Christ's sweet anathemas of hate.

[1] Chubb, Toland, Tindall of All Souls', Lord Herbert of Cherbury.

30

ETERNAL SIN[1]

'A SIN that passes!' Lo, one sad and high,
Bearing a taper stately like a queen,
Talks in her sleep—'Will these hands ne'er be clean?'
'What's done cannot be undone.' She walks by
As she must walk thro' her eternity,
Bearing within her that which she hath been.
'The sin that I have sinn'd is but one scene,
Life is a manifold drama,' so men cry.
Alas! the shadow follows thee too well.
The interlude outgrows its single part,
And every other voice is stricken dumb.
That which thou carriest to the silent dell
Is the eternal sin thou hast become,
The everlasting tragedy thou art!

[1] Dr. Pusey's *What is of Faith*, etc. Bishop Martensen's *Christian Dogmatics*. 'Guilty of an eternal sin' is the true reading of Mark iii. 29.

31

FREEWILL

If God be love, will He not cause His sun
Of happiness one day its beams to thrust
Alike upon the just and the unjust,
His silver rain to fall on every one?
Not highest to the highest bliss alone,[1]
Nor dearest love that loves because it must,
Nor trust much trusted if constrain'd to trust.
What, when the battle of our lives is done,
Hath God reserved for His peculiar prize?
The willing, undivided human soul.
Were hearts unwilling forced to will God's will,
For them, unfreely freed, mere lucid skies
Their home would be, love's self a harsh control,
And half the Heaven's long music lose its thrill.

[1] Butler's *Analogy*.

32

CONJECTURAL HOPE—THE UNIVERSALISTS

YET after all we cry, Shall God devise
No way to bring His banish'd ones again?
Shall there not some aspersion of sweet rain
Fall on those faded faces, those hard eyes?
Shall not a sudden tenderness surprise
Their hearts with its relief, as babies drain
With their soft lips away the mother's pain,
As in a great grief sometimes madness dies?
I hear no certain news of their estate—
Ofttimes is utter silence; then comes much
Of love's soft hand and of her silver key
Obscurely prophesying some wondrous touch.
But ever in the distance a 'Too late!'
Dies as among dark hills a moaning sea.

33

THE HOPE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

METHOUGHT a dear one came from death's retreat:
The pale presentment of his face was thin.
Ruin sat greyly there, a shadow of sin.
Fire needed none, nor any such red beat
Of rain as soak'd Canute's snow winding-sheet;
Only the recollection that can win
No pause, the footsteps that cannot pass in,
The restless recollection, the tired feet.
'Thou art not happy?' and he answered, 'No!'
'Come to me! Jesus saith,' I made reply.
'Hast thou not part in that, though so forlorn?'
'Yes; but the time is long, and my feet slow.'
He spake, and with a faint, immortal sigh
Left me—yet hope grew thro' the grey of morn.

34

HOPE AGAIN

THE far-off darkness that we cannot pierce,
Seen distant when we reach the other side,
By love's light shall be over-canopied.
Far off shall rise above all temporal curse,
Above all falling-off from fair to worse,
Above all death, the Church-song yet untried;
So that no surface discords then shall hide
The under harmony of the universe.
So, poised immeasurably high, the lark
O'er fields of battle, upturn'd faces white,
Sings her heart out above the redden'd wold
Thro' miles that stretch away to God in gold;
So a far town of dim lamps in the dark
Constructs itself a coronal of light.

35

VICTRIX DELECTATIO[1]

An ocean child lived on a northern strand
In a hut—bent-thatch'd, blown around with foam;
One found and bore him to a lovely home,
Folded in a sweet valley far inland.
The boy's heart pointed seaward, as a wand
Points to hid fountains. Once he chanc'd to roam
Till he clomb upward to a mountain dome:
Far off he saw a blue speck tremulous spann'd
By azure sky. 'The sea, the sea!' he cried,
Weeping; for sorely he had missed the dawn,
The movement and the music of the sea.
Who loves it once in love for aye shall be
With the victorious sweetness of the tide,
Its long, strange, sweet sighs slowly backward drawn.

[1] St. Augustine's doctrine in his various writings on Grace. See also Fénelon's 'Lettres,' especially those which close the second volume of the *Œuvres Spirituelles*.

36

Spiritual ocean, measurelessly broad!
Who loves thee once truly shall evermore
Be drawn to thee, fair sea without a shore!
Surely and indeclinably, not over-awed,
Not over-mastered (for such force were fraud
Where sweet love is in question): conqueror
Of these our human hearts when they are sore,
The true friend's suasion truly doth persuade—
The touch'd heart at thy magic moves, blue tide!
Thine own victorious sweetness draws us nigher.
There is no fragrance and no fall like thine.
They by thine ancient beauty who abide,
Spirits emancipated, see no fire
But that of rose and gold which is divine.

37

THE PRINCESS ALICE

CHILD, with the soft hymn by a father's bed
Sung soothing; maiden, whose bright face did stir
All our rough England with the love of her,
For the dear help she gave the aching head
Of our good Queen—beyond all sung or said
Of fair adventure and of golden skies
The morning dawn'd for those delighted eyes;—
Woman most happy, most serenely wed!
Is there aught better, aught that angels care
To look on more intently as they wait
For their ascension from this lower earth,
Than lives thus doubly, delicately fair,
With double coronation, double state,
One fortune's crown, one fairer far of worth?

38

Sweet watcher by the wounded; undefiled
Pitier, in whom earth's fallen might behold
The crystal's purity without its cold;
Pale, passionate weeper o'er a princely child;
Thoughtful and thorough learner of the mild
But difficult lesson Charity can unfold;
Calm, honest thinker, gently overbold,
Who for a little trod the glacial wild
Of doubt, but found it more than doubly sweet
After the silence of that frozen sea,
After the absence of Christ's living face,
To clasp with her cut hands the bleeding feet.
More beauty than in beauty's self may be
In thought-won faith and grief which angels trace.

39

THE brightness and the shadow finely blent,
The beauty and the sorrow, all the twin
Delight and desolation have pass'd in
Behind the veil; and our Princess present,
Not with the white face of a monument,
But with a wondrous look of vanish'd sin,
And such serenity as only win
Souls that have fought their way to full content.
So be she seen by love that ne'er forgets,
Pathetic with such pathos as God wills,
A presence on the happy Highland braes,
A memory like a breath of violets
In letters from a land that sunshine fills,
Perfumed though paler after many days.

40

ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT CARNOT

WHAT voice is that which o'er the ocean,
Through what is lit and what obscure no less,
Night's coruscations and its darknesses,
Still rises starward, linking man to man?
It is the sorrow metropolitan
Of all earth's kings, the voice of their distress
For one who never sought their crown or dress,
The gentle-manner'd good republican.
Our England, too, sends France across the deep
Love's message no new wars shall ever shake,
Her human sense of all that comes with time;
The dreams which are the hopes of men asleep,
The hopes which are the dreams of men awake,
The tragedy around life's pantomime.

41

Beside the dead man two veil'd women sit;
All the night long over the catafalque
Twelve tapers burn; from many a precious stalk
Lilies as white as sunshine ever lit
Their fine funereal fragrancy emit.
'Trifles!'
Yet outside do the heedless walk,
Outside the Elysée the godless talk,
Outside the Elysée is prayerless wit.
Within, the quiet demonstration lies
That the one strength which makes the struggler true
Is in the silent sweetness of belief,
Is in the triple immortalities
Call'd God, creed, prayer. Thus we console our grief,
And half the heav'n of France grows almost blue.

42

THE HOME OF THE DYMOCKS

BENEATH the couchant lion, grey and grim,
We lit upon the last of state romance,
The last of chivalrous circumstance;
The Champions—each his banneret over him,
Moth-eaten, fluttering in its faded rim—
Who gather'd on their ineffectual lance
Death's dust and rust, their gallant utterance
Thinn'd, the coronations waxing dim
As are the memories of the long-dead kings,
As are the memories of the knight and squire,
Here where Time's self sleeps stirless 'neath the sky
In all this courtly, ghostly Scrivelsby,
And shadows are the only moving things
In all the quiet land of Lincolnshire.

WOODHALL, *August* 1899.

43

FROST—MORNING

The morn is cold. A whiteness newly brought
Lightly and loosely powders every place,
The panes among yon trees that eastward face
Flash rosy fire from the opposite dawning caught,—
As the face flashes with a splendid thought,
As the heart flashes with a touch of grace
When heaven's light comes on ways we cannot trace,
Unsought, yet lovelier than we ever sought.
In the blue northern sky is a pale moon,
Through whose thin texture something doth appear
Like the dark shadow of a branchy tree.—
Fit morning for the prayers of one like me,
Whose life is in midwinter, and must soon
Come to the shortest day of all my year!

44

SUNSET

THE early sunset occupies the entire
Variety of heav'n with various dyes,
Enough to glorify a hundred skies.
Far west five lines of crimson and of fire
I count, rigid and straight as if of wire,
Like a fan, first with shell-like bands doth rise
Something of silvery texture, to surprise
The spaces overhead, and what is higher
By changing sudden into many a fleece
Faint flush'd with unimaginable rose,
That slowly steels itself with sternest blue.
The heav'n is peaceful with an ominous peace
As of a nation waiting for its throes,
And feeling strong enough to see things
through.

45

THE VOICE OF OCEAN

THE ocean's voice is vast, and only one,
Yet still as its great messages are lent
To different hearts it seemeth different.
The child finds fairy music in its tone,
Sweet fear, dim bells of silver unison;
To the young fair adventure they present,
Singing him off to isle or continent,
Where deeds of high results are to be done.
The old man hears them—'Grey we are and lorn.'
'Lonely and grey,' he thinks; 'and some old sin
Under the starlight or the storm always
Drives you a work to do, a bourne to win,
Baffled through long æonian yesterdays,
To end in peace some unapparent morn.'

46

THE LAST DAY OF SUMMER

All the sweet summer azure is not fled—
What hath the woodland, then, to do with grief?
The apparition of a yellow leaf,
The half-suspected russet overhead—
Of this it dreams, and is disquieted.
Snowdrops and other dainty things as brief,
Whereof the young anemones were chief,
The tremulous anemones are dead.
Long since the snowdrops have been fain to die;
Long since the anemones have pass'd away:
Some colour'd leaves discolour every morn—
Touch'd by the thought of which chronology
The trees have something that they long to say,
Inaudible, multitudinous, forlorn.

47

A HOT DAY BY LOUGH SWILLY

A HOT day in September. A white mist
Clung to the vale, and up the hill a blur,
As of thin smoke, part blue, part tenderer,
Stretch'd o'er the corn. The ripples lazily kiss'd
As on the bent I lay their sound to list.
Between Lough Swilly and the mountain spur
I saw a green down stretch without a stir.
A curlew was the only harmonist.
The sole shapes there were gulls, that in the heat
Strutted upon the sward a space each way,
White-plumed; and crows, like crones in shawls of black
Dropp'd glossy from the shoulders to the feet.
But far afield, howe'er may burn the day,
Harvesters work—work's lessons never lack.

49

THE QUEEN'S VISIT TO IRELAND

EACH good and perfect gift man's heart to move
Comes from the heart before it leaves the hand,
At once inspired and exquisitely plann'd.
Kings learn this piece of kingcraft from above;
Men call it tact, the angels know 'tis love!—
Ours is a tragic past, a fatal land,
Which all would heal, but few can understand.
What offering, Lady, bringest thou to prove
Such souls? The sacrifice of hours, by thee
Well-won, exchanged for the continuous strain,—
Renunciation of the Italian morn,
Of the blue Mediterranean sea,
For our grey waves and April fields forlorn,—
Gift such as this will not be made in vain.

50

Writ in a fair charáctery of flowers
Full oft are queenly names. Some bud that blows
Dreams itself on superbly to a rose,
Wears odorous purple through the passing hours,
And breathes a tale of queenship to its bowers.
What finds our Queen in yonder plant that grows
No iridescent colours to disclose,
No waft of scent wherewith to endow the showers—
That little feeble frond trifoliate,
The symbol of a nation's passionate heart—
In every Irish glen belovèd much?
Lo! with a tender and a subtle art,
As an old Saint with types, a Queen of late
Colour'd it with the summer of her touch.

51

The young alone are fair, the old are great,
The young have fire made visible to sight;
Young eyes have fire, the old alone have light,—
The light which all earth's weary ones await,
The light that waxes as the day grows late.
Deem not she thinks that now 'tis sunset quite,
That a pathetic majesty of night
Falls grey upon the grandeur of her state.
She thinks of the young valours who went down,
Marching across the battle-zone of fire
In the red baptism of war's martyrdom,
Her glorious Irish soldiers. Her desire
Is quick to see the green land of their home,
And fill the nations with their high renown.

52

So let a 'favourable speed' assist
The keel that bears her yacht across the sea,
Let there no spindrift of the salt spray be,
Let night sleep sweetly, let wild waves be whist,
The calm unstain'd by any wreath of mist.
On land be kindred influence, that we,
From our old panics of suspicion free,
May meet each other in a happy tryst.
Hark! on my ears what sounds are these that strike?
Not of old fierce extremes, but of one cause
Seen now through all variety of form.
Lo! one great people rising oceanlike
By regularity of tidal laws,
Not with the undisciplined passion of the storm.

53

O THAT a fortnight's Truce of God might sound!
O that this land of eloquence and wit
In the rich tones that almost treble it,
Order more order'd being so lightly bound,
Freedom more free in being so fair encrown'd,
And law's stern wrath, unpassionately writ
(Safeguard of homes) by this great presence lit,
Might mutely hear. So on this fateful ground
All sweet consideration; love that starts
At nought as alien in the soul of man;
Not less pathetic, less revengeful, songs;
Might make one right majestic from two wrongs,
And one fair century from a fortnight's span.
So let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts.

L'ENVOI

Essayest thou, poet of a long-past morn,
A new forth-pouring of song's waves to try,
Song's wither'd blooms to fanes again to tie?
Time was when from thy thoughts these waves seem'd borne,
Sunlit and strong, magnificently torn,
Their very fall a flash of victory;
Time was thy flowers seem'd flush'd as by the sky,—
To thee, perchance to others, now a scorn;
Two or three fibrous skeleton-leaves, with story
Of some sweet summer-days and things that died;
Two or three bubbles for the big-brimm'd brine,
Two or three yellow foam-flakes for the glory.
What if the flowers should breathe again, the tide
Tumble sonorous on a strand divine?

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Alexander, William, Abp. of Armagh
The finding of the book, and other poems

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